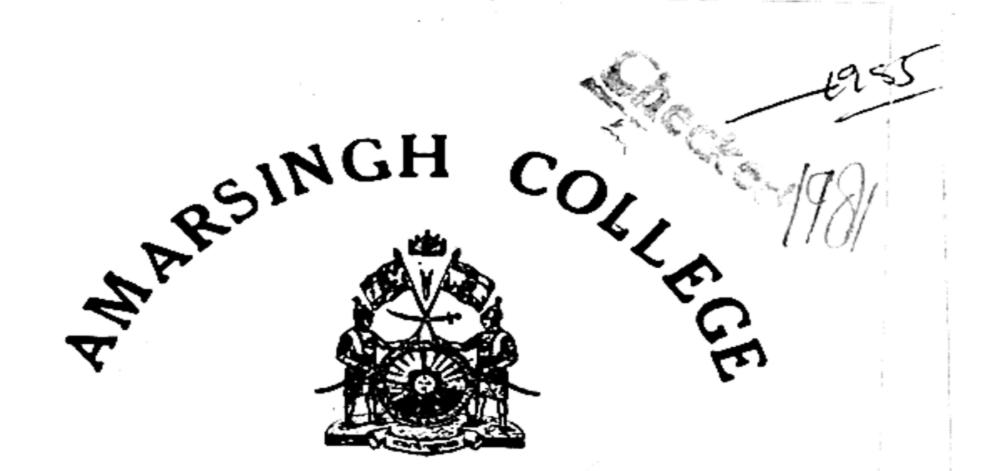
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# THE PROBLEM OF HAMLET



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THE PROBLEM

OF

HAMLET

A SOLUTION

A. S. CAIRNCROSS M.A., D.LITT.

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON 1936

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# NOTE

References are to the following editions:
Hamlet, First Quarto . Shakespere Facsimiles by Hamlet, Second Quarto . Griggs, 1879-80
First Folio Booth, 1864
The Troublesome Raigne of King  Iohn  The True Chronicle History of  King Leir  The Famous Victories of Henry  Students' Facsimile Edition  the Fifth
Edward II The Works of Christopher Marlowe, ed. C. F. Tucker Brooke, 1910
The Contention The Cambridge Shakespeare, Shakespeare's Plays

I AM indebted to the Editor of the Times Literary Supplement for permission to reprint a number of extracts from a letter of mine published in that periodical, and the parallels made by another correspondent, Mr. Alfred Hart, of Melbourne, Australia, to whom my thanks are also due.

A. S. C.

### PREFACE

This study began as an attempt to solve the longstanding textual problem of the First Quarto of Hamlet. In a very short time, however, it overstrayed the limits of that problem, and drew into the field of investigation a number of others of almost equal magnitude and importance. It involved the relation of The Troublesome Raigne of King Iohn to King John, of Leir to Lear, and of The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth to Henry IV and Henry V; and finally the whole question of Shakespearian chronology. The concluding chapters, which deal with these further problems, contain much that is, of necessity, problematical, either for lack of sufficient evidence and research, or because it is put forward mainly or entirely as hypothesis for further investigation. These chapters may thus prove unfounded or misguided without invalidating the main thesis of this volume.

With regard to the main problem of *Hamlet* itself, I have attempted to establish these propositions:

(a) The complete *Hamlet*, represented (with a few modifications) by the Second Quarto (Q2), was written for the Queen's Men, by Shakespeare, late in 1588 or early in 1589.

- (b) This version, being too long for the stage, was at once "cut", the shorter version (also with a few modifications) being represented by the First Folio (F1) text (1623).
- (c) The First Quarto (Q1, 1603) is a memorypiracy made from the "cut" version, about August-September, 1593, for the "broken" Pembroke company.
- (d) The following plays, from which the pirate included echoes in Q1, were therefore written and acted before August 1593:—King John, Twelfth Night, Henry IV, Henry V, Henry VI, Pericles, Othello, The Merry Wives of Windsor, The Spanish Tragedy, Edward II, An Humorous Day's Mirth.

The chief obstacle to the acceptance of such a revolutionary reconstruction of Shakepeare's life and work will naturally arise from the widely accepted interpretation of Dowden. Here I can only ask the reader to suspend judgment, and to consider this case on its merits; and I suggest that literary, stylistic, and other general criticisms are of no virtue against the evidence of textual data. Texts and chronology come first: theories of development are made to suit. If this case is unfounded, it can only be shown to be so on textual grounds. If it is sound, a new theory of development, in place of Dowden's, will in time be found that will conform to the facts.

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## INTRODUCTION

It is now a generally accepted theory that some at least of the Elizabethan Bad Quartos, or corrupt and imperfect versions of plays, are best explained as having been made entirely from memory by actors touring the provinces without prompt-copies of their own. This theory was first applied, in 1910, by Dr. W. W. Greg, to the Bad Quarto of The Merry Wives of Windsor. In the introduction to his edition of this Quarto, Dr. Greg argued, from personal acquaintance with such versions, that memory provided the most satisfactory explanation. From a comparison of the accuracy and completeness with which the various "parts" had been reproduced, he was further able to indicate the Host as the author of the "Bad" version. In his edition of Sheridan, Mr. R. Crompton Rhodes provided evidence corroborating the "memory" theory, by printing an account of how an acting version of The Duenna was actually written without a text of the play. More recently, the late Dr. J. S. Smart 2 extended the theory to cover The Taming of a Shrew, The Contention of the two famous Houses of Yorke & Lancaster, and The true Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke, which, he argued, were memory-

See pp. 36 ff.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Shakespeare, Truth and Tradition.

versions of The Taming of the Shrew, 2 Henry VI, and 3 Henry VI respectively. Professor Peter Alexander 1 has now elaborated and established in detail this explanation of these versions. He has further indicated the years 1592-3, during which the London theatres were closed on account of the plague, as their date of origin, and Pembroke's Men, who at that time were forced to sell their "books" and go into the country to play, as the originators, or "pirates".

The present study carries the theory a further stage by extending its application to the Bad Quarto (Q1) of Hamlet, published in 1603. Mr. Rhodes, in his tercentenary study of the First Folio, 2 is the only critic (except perhaps Fitzgerald) 3 who has gone most of the way towards accepting this quarto as entirely a product of memory. 4 He reaches the following conclusions:

The player of Marcellus (i.e. the actor responsible for the Q1 version) relied upon—

- (a) An accurate transcript of his own former part.
- (b) His memory, which was stronger and fuller in the scenes where Marcellus played than those where he did not,
- (c) And his invention where his memory failed. Mr. Rhodes relies on the invention of the actor

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Henry VI and Richard III.

Blackwell, 1923, pp. 74–82.

<sup>3</sup> The First Quarto of Hamlet: a Literary Fraud, 1910.

Except, of course, for the transcript of one speech (II. 11. 60-80).

because there are still passages in Q1 for which he can find no source. These sources, however, can now be identified, 1 and the last obstacle to the addition of this quarto to the list of memory-piracies is removed.

The identification and examination of Bad Quartos of the plays, however, has not hitherto altered fundamentally the current interpretations of Shakespeare's life and work. It has affected one point at a time, and has only gradually modified accepted views. It has left intact, or nearly so, the framework of chronology and development erected by such scholars as Dowden and Sir E. K. Chambers. The four main stages of Shakespeare's progress, for example, from "In the Workshop" to "On the Heights", remain undisturbed. Our conception of the First Period, indeed, no longer includes the idea that Shakespeare revised or touched up the work of Marlowe, Greene, or Peele. But the idea of the workshop still does service for some sort of dramatic apprenticeship, however vaguely we conceive it. The other three periods remain as they were.

This examination of the First Quarto of Hamlet, however, has carried itself, as it happens, to a point at which these accepted interpretations no longer seem to fit the facts, and a threat is offered to the whole structure of Shakespearian chronology. For it has led to the conclusion that Hamlet, as we have

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See Chapter 5, pp. 56-68.

it, was written by Shakespeare for the Queen's Men at the end of 1588 or the beginning of 1589. The Bad Quarto was written, I suggest, at the same time, and by one of the same group of travelling actors, as *The Contention* and *The True Tragedy*, i.e. in 1593.

A startling revolution, certainly, since Hamlet is usually assigned to 1600-1601, comparatively late in Shakespeare's career, and since the earliest accepted date for any play of his is about 1589 or 1590. In face of the established chronology it will be difficult to receive such an early date for what has generally been regarded as a mature play, especially since no complete alternative chronology can immediately be offered to adjust with certainty the dates of the other plays—as, it seems, many of them will require to be adjusted—in relation to Hamlet.

The alteration in the date of *Hamlet* sets out with at least one considerable factor of the situation in its favour. There is, as there must be in the nature of things, a tendency to post-date Elizabethan plays. We can usually fix a posterior limit of date, but seldom an anterior. We can say that a certain play was written earlier than a given year, but not how much earlier. It may have been written one year before, or ten years, or twenty. There is no means of telling. The first reference is often a mere chance mention in a diary, or an allusion in print, years after the play was written. Topical

references may similarly have been inserted late. The same disqualification applies even more strongly to printed copies of plays, since the companies were notoriously disinclined to print their "books": when they did appear in print it was more likely to be later than sooner after they were first written and produced.

There is thus a considerable probability that many plays really belong to much earlier dates than we imagine. How serious the post-dating can be may be seen by turning to page 130, where the case of *Pericles* is considered. *Pericles* is at present dated 1608 or 1609. Yet in *Hamlet Q1* (1603) there occur unmistakable fragments from *Pericles*, which was thus clearly written before 1603. Further, if the present argument is well founded in assigning that Quarto to 1593, *Pericles* must be put back ten years earlier still. And there is yet an additional possibility that, if there is any truth in Dryden's reference to *Pericles* as Shakespeare's first play, it must be relegated to the eighties, to the years 1585-88!

Several other favourable factors are perhaps entitled to attention. One is the remarkable ease with which, once the line of approach had been decided, the whole problem resolved itself, and how one coincidence after another seemed to seal the solution with the stamp of certainty. After a vain search around the years 1600–1603 for the source of the memory-tags and scraps found only in Q1,

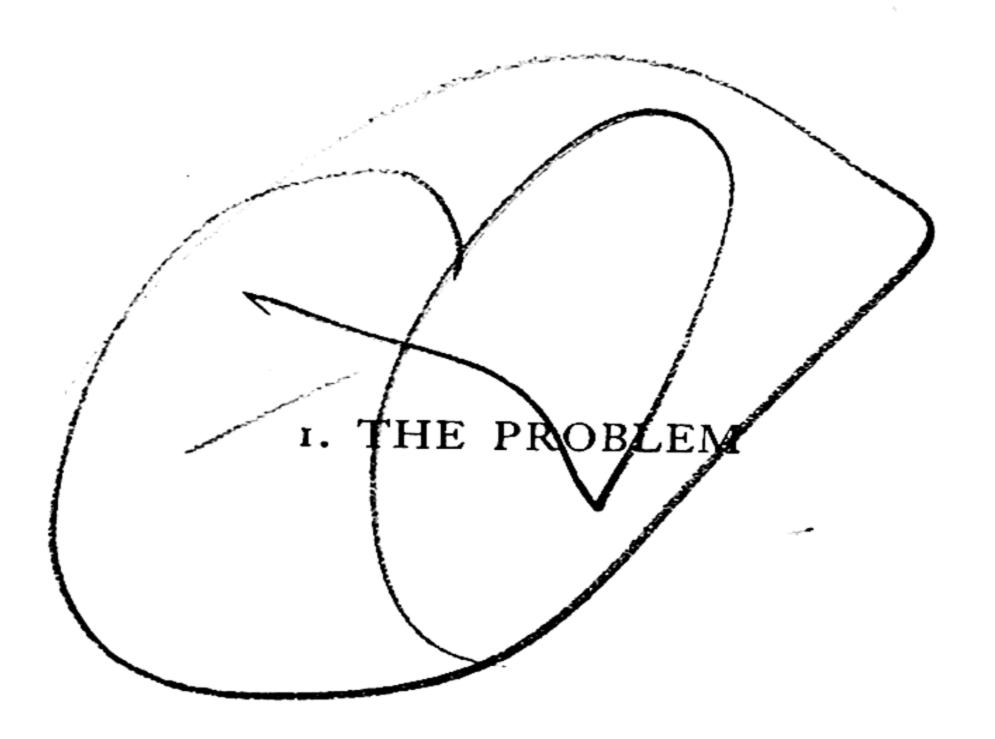
it was only necessary to turn back to plays known to be earlier than 1593, especially to Shakespeare's own early plays, to be certain of finding them there, if anywhere.

It was further possible, after identifying the tags borrowed from any one play, to inspect them afterwards with the certainty of finding that they would prove to have come from a "part", from speeches or cues of one character, or occasionally from speeches made by other characters in his presence or in his hearing, but never from scenes in which he did not appear or had no direct opportunity of hearing. The tags once discovered, it was also possible—except in the case of two or three stock-phrases—to read through the bulk of surviving Elizabethan drama without ever meeting them again. It was possible, moreover, to argue thus: Hamlet QI was written from memory in 1593, about August or September—it includes borrowings from Twelfth Night—therefore Twelfth Night was written before August 1593, and not, as at present supposed, about 1600—Twelfth Night refers to a "new map with the augmentation of the Indies", full of rhumb-lines, and supposed at present to be either Edward Wright's map (1600)1 or the map in Hakluyt's Voyages (2nd edition, 1 599)-some earlier map must actually be referred to—and to look for such a map, with the certainty of finding it. It appeared in 1592, made by Moly-

<sup>1</sup> Reproduced in Shakespeare's England, i. 174.

neux, and is now in the library of the Middle Temple, London. Such topical references, both internal and external, have, without forcing, fallen into place in terms of events in 1588 and 1589: whereas critics now require some faith to refer them to events about 1600.

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#### 1. THE PROBLEM

THERE are three distinct texts of *Hamlet*. The play was first entered on the Stationers' Register on July 26, 1602, as follows:

James Robertes. Entred for his Copie vnder the handes of master Pasfield and master Waterson warden A booke called the Revenge of Hamlett Prince (of) Denmarke as yt was latelie Acted by the Lord Chamberleyne his servantes. . . . . . . . . vjd

In 1603 the version here entered appeared in quarto form, with the title-page: The / Tragicall Historie of / Hamlet / Prince of Denmarke / By William Shake-speare. / As it hath beene diverse times acted by his Highnesse ser- / uants in the Cittie of London: as also in the two V- / niversities of Cambridge and Oxford, and else-where / [Device] / At London printed for N. L. and Iohn Trundell. / 1603. The running title was: The Tragedie of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke.

This version is known as the First Quarto (Q1). It was unknown until 1823, when a copy, wanting the last page, was discovered by Sir Henry Bunbury. In 1856 a second copy, wanting the title-page, was bought by a Dublin book-seller from a student of Trinity College, Dublin.

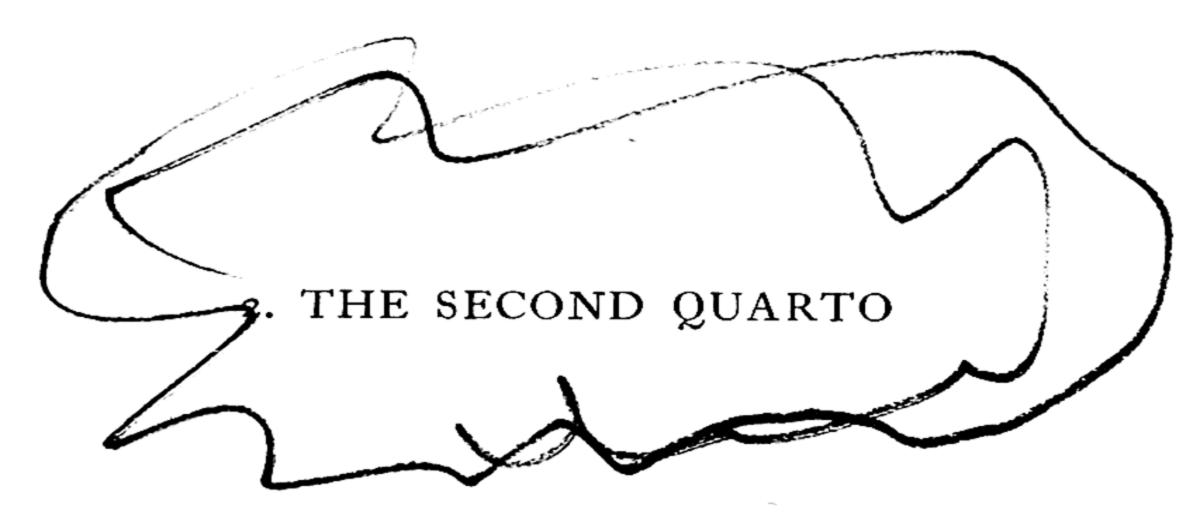
In 1604, without further entry in the Stationers'

Register, appeared the "enlarged" version known as the Second Quarto (Q2). The title-page runs: The / Tragicall Historie of / Hamlet, / Prince of Denmarke. / By William Shakespeare. / Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much / againe as it was, according to the true and perfect / Coppie. / [Nicholas Ling's device.] / At London, / Printed by I. R. for N. L. and are to be sold at his / shoppe vnder Saint Dunstons Church in / Fleetstreet. 1604.

The other Quartos, Q3 (1611), Q4 (no date), and Q5 (1637) are direct or indirect reproductions of the Second.

In 1623 appeared the First Folio (F1), the first collected edition of Shakespeare's plays, published by his fellow-actors, John Heminge and Henry Condell. The subsequent Folios base their text of *Hamlet* on the text of the First.

These three basic versions (Q1, Q2, F1) are apparently of independent origin. The text of Q1 differs greatly in length and content from the other two, and these substantially enough from each other to suggest a different source. The textual problem is that of their relation and origin.



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## 2. THE SECOND QUARTO

The Second Quarto is the most complete of the three versions of *Hamlet*. It lacks only some 85 lines that appear in the First Folio. (The Folio, on the other hand, omits over 200 lines that appear in this Quarto.) Nine passages in all are omitted, or rather do not appear, in Q2. These omissions can be accounted for in the following ways:

# (a) Printers' errors

- (1) II. 11. 215-216
  - Q2 Pol. I will leaue him and my daughter.

    (Ophelia is not present.) p. 35
  - F1 Pol. I will leave him,

And sodainely contriue the meanes of meeting

Betweene him, and my daughter.

p. 261, col. 2

- (2) V. 1. 113 ff.
  - Q2 Ham. . . . with his . . . fines, his double vouchers, his recoueries, to have his fine pate full of fine durt, p. 85
  - FI Ham. . . . with his . . . Fines, his double Vouchers, his Recoueries: Is this the fine of his Fines, and the recouery of his Recoueries, to have his fine Pate full of fine Dirt?

    p. 277, col. 2

(3) V. 1. 37-53

Q2 Clowne. A was the first that euer bore Armes. Ile put another question to thee, . . . p.84

F1 Clo. He was the first that euer bore Armes.

Other. Why he had none.

Clo. What, ar't a Heathen? how dost thou vnderstand the Scripture? the Scripture sayes Adam dig'd; could hee digge without Armes? Ile put another question to thee; ...

p. 277, col. 1

In these passages the same word recurs, and the eye of the printer caught the second (him, Recoueries, Armes) in mistake for the first.

The following are accidental omissions:

# (4) II. 11. 335-338

Q2 Ham. . . . the humorus Man shall end his part in peace, and the Lady shall say her minde freely:

p. 36

F1 Ham. ... the humorous man shall end his part in peace: the Clowne shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickled a' th' sere: and the Lady shall say her minde freely;

p. 262, col. 2

A number of short phrases are also omitted, either through carelessness or the state of the copy. At V. 11. 68-80 Hamlet breaks off a speech in the middle of a line, so that the first part remains meaningless.

(b) Two cuts of some length have been made in deference to contemporary susceptibilities. The

dialogue between Hamlet, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern, on the theme "Denmark's a prison" has been excised from II. 11. 244-276. In Q2 the thirty or so lines of the Folio are reduced to two:

Ham. Then is Doomes day neere, but your newes is not true;

But in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsonoure?

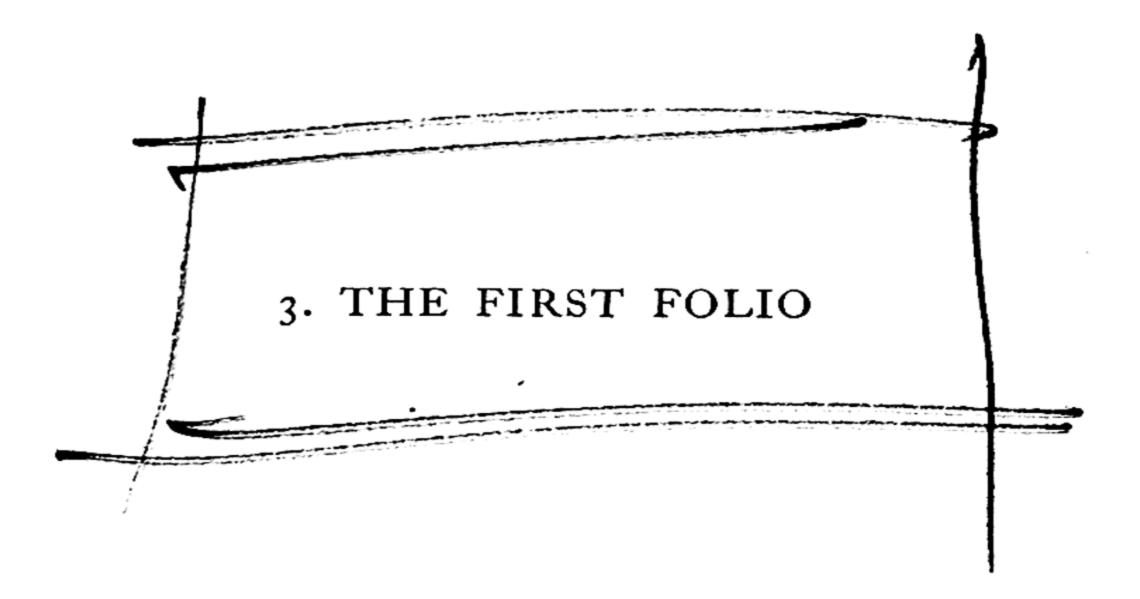
That this is not a later insertion, but an excision, is betrayed by the double "but". In 1603 Anne of Denmark, wife of James I, became Queen of England, and the omission of this passage is quite intelligible.

Queen Anne was also patron of the Children of the Queen's Revels, which probably accounts for the similar omission of the passage in II. 11. referring to the child-actors.

Allowing for such printers' errors, the two censored passages, and slight alterations of names and changes in the attribution of speeches, there is nothing in Q1<sup>1</sup> or F1 that is not also represented in Q2. This Quarto may accordingly be taken to have represented the complete text of *Hamlet*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Other differences in Q1 will be explained and accounted for in the succeeding chapters.

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## 3. THE FIRST FOLIO

The omissions from the First Folio text of Hamlet are more numerous than from the Second Quarto. In all they amount to more than two hundred lines. They consist mainly of long speeches or passages by Hamlet (I. IV. 17-38; III. IV. 71-81, 161-170, 202-210; IV. IV. 32-66; V. II. 110-149), and the King (IV. I. 41-44; IV. VII. 69-81, 101-103, 115-124). In view of the length of Hamlet—it is the longest of Shakespeare's plays—and the strain on the memory of the actors, especially in the part of Hamlet, it is not surprising that such "cuts" should be made.

The printer's carelessness is also responsible for a number of omissions in F1. The chief of these are:

# I. 11. 58-61

Q2 Polo. Hath my Lord wroung from me my slowe leaue

By laboursome petition, and at last Vpon his will I seald my hard consent, I doe beseech you give him leave to goe.

Fi Pol. He hath my Lord:

[Omission.]

I do beseech you give him leave to go.

## II. 11. 465

- Q2 Ham. ... cald it an honest method, as wholesome as sweete, & by very much, more handsome then fine: one speech in't I chiefly loued,...
- F1 Ham....cal'd it an honest method. [Omission].
  One cheefe Speech in it, I cheefely lou'd,...

The lines omitted in both these passages appear, modified, in Q1, and are thus real omissions, not later Q2 insertions. Other slight omissions, which may be due to the printer's carelessness, but perhaps to cuts, occur at III. 11. 181-182, III. 11. 228-229, III. IV. 180, and IV. 111. 28-30.

The main differences thus accounted for, it seems possible to refer Q2 and F1 to a common origin. The theory that F1 is a transcript of Q2 best fits the facts. Certain passages in Q2 would be bracketed or barred in the margin for omission. That such cuts were often not deleted, but marked in this way, we know from statements like that on the title-page of The Duchess of Malfi, "The perfect and exact Coppy, with diverse things Printed, that the length of the Play would not beare in the Presentment". When it was necessary to send the Q2 text to the printers, a transcript would be made. The "cut" passages would be omitted, as a saving of time and as no longer actually used in practice. The passages on the Children's Companies and "Denmark's a prison" would

appear in the transcription, but, owing to censor-ship before publication, not in Q2.

The transcription theory has recently been worked out in great detail by Dr. J. Dover Wilson, and with such cogency as to leave little doubt of its correctness. Dr Wilson, however, thinks, wrongly to my mind, that FI is not only a transcript, but a transcript of a transcript. It seems best to give a short summary of Dr Wilson's conclusions.

He has compared the Folio texts of *Hamlet* and *Antony and Cleopatra* with the corresponding texts in the *Cambridge Shakespeare*.<sup>2</sup> He finds that the Folio departures from the Cambridge text, consisting mainly of slips ordinarily made by compositors, occur in the following proportions:

	A.C.	Hamlet
(1) Verbs (tense, etc.)	13	32
(2) Number (nouns, etc.)	8	47
(3) Omitted words	6	86
(4) Verbal substitutes	20	202

Assuming equal competence in the compositors of these two Folio texts, it is obvious that the copy for *Hamlet* was inferior to that for *Antony and Cleopatra*. A scribe must have intervened between Q2 and F1.

Dr Wilson finds this conclusion corroborated

2 Op. cit., i. 44-45.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> In The Manuscript of Shakespeare's Hamlet (C.U.P., 1934) and in a series of lectures previously delivered at Cambridge.

by an analysis of the various types of verbal substitution. Among these he distinguishes a group where a word is replaced by another synonymous word that also occurs *later* in the play. For example 1:

### I. 1. 150

The Cocke that is the Trumpet to the day, (Q2: morne)

Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding Throate Awake the God of Day:

### II. 11. 529

A clout about that head: (Q2: vppon)
Where late the Diadem stood, and for a Robe
About her lanke and all ore-teamed Loines

#### III. 11

- 1. 375. it will discourse most excellent Musicke (eloquent)
- 1. 384. and there is much Musicke, excellent Voice, in this little Organe . . .

#### IV. iv. 2-3

#### Fortinbras

Claimes the conveyance of a promis'd March (Craues)

Which now to clame my vantage doth inuite me.

V. 11. 401

Dr Wilson finds at least twenty-three examples 2 of this "anticipation" in F1.

The transcriber of the Folio version must therefore, he argues, have been a prompter or player

1 Op. cit., i. 57-59.

2 Op. cit., i. 54.

attached to the company, familiar with the play, but rather slovenly, and, judging by the number of omissions, in a great hurry. Anticipatory substitutions are not made by a compositor.

The date of the transcript, however, is not so certain. Dr. Wilson thinks that one transcript was made in 1623 for the Folio printers, another probably much earlier. This is possible. One transcript, however, made in 1603, seems sufficient to account for the state of the Folio text. It is likely that when Shakespeare's manuscript, the true and perfect copy, was sent to the printers, to be produced as Q2, a transcript was hurriedly made. It is not likely that the company would risk the loss of what was probably the only existing text of the play.

It has been argued, or rather suggested, e.g. by Macdonald¹ and De Groot² that a printed copy of Q2, and not a transcript, was used as a prompt-book from 1604 until at least 1622-3, and that the mistakes were corrected and the censored passages on the Child-actors and Denmark replaced. A transcript, omitting the "acting" cuts, was then made, and this appeared as F1. Or alternatively, the cut passages were actually deleted, and therefore do not appear in F1. On either supposition, the argument makes a large demand on the editorial care and capacity of the

<sup>1</sup> The Tragedie of Hamlet, Fifield, 1905.
2 Hamlet: Its Textual History, Amsterdam, 1923.

actors. It is, indeed, possible, and even likely, that a transcript was made just before the publication of F1. But not, surely, from a printed promptcopy of Q2. Consider what this would imply. To correct this copy—to replace the two censored cuts, to mark exactly all the other "acting" cuts (already in operation, since reflected in Q1) from the MS. copy, in short, to collate carefully the MS. and the printed book—would require a considerable amount of labour. It also implies that the actors, not usually so careful or so leisurelyas the transcript itself shows—took great pains over restoring the very parts of the text that they considered superfluous for their purposes. And the printers' errors and omissions (since they appear fully and correctly in F1) must have been corrected and replaced. But F1 shows no sign of any such insertions, as it might be expected occasionally to do.

Further, if a printed copy of Q2 was in the possession of the Company in 1622, is it likely that the marked cuts would be omitted in a transcript? The editors of F1 professed to give the texts of Shakespeare's plays "perfect of their limbes; and . . . absolute in their numbers, as he conceived the(m)". They would include the best and fullest text available in the theatre. But, not being in possession of the Q2 manuscript or the printed version (or, if so, not being aware of its

<sup>1</sup> Ft. To the great Variety of Readers.

fuller and more original nature), they sent the copy they actually had and used—what we know as F1.

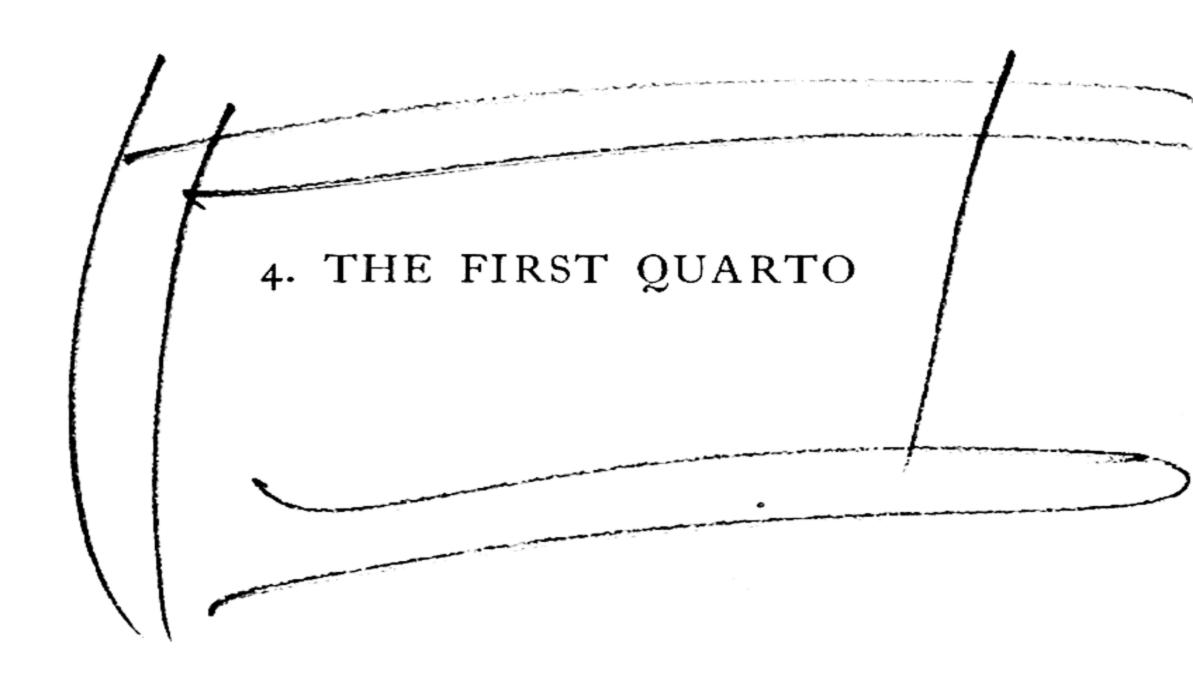
The weight of probability, then, leans heavily on the side of a transcript, made in 1603 or 1604, with the cuts omitted for speed, and the subsequent use as a prompt-copy of this transcript, which was itself printed with a few modifications as F1. When a text was required for the First Folio, the King's men may have made a transcript of their transcript. But, if they followed their earlier practice, they would send to the printers the older text and keep for themselves the fresh transcript. In which case F1 is only a transcript, not a transcript of a transcript. With such an old play as Hamlet, however, they may not even have troubled to make a transcript, but sent their copy straight to the printers.

In addition to the cuts in F1 already noticed, there occur certain changes in the actual text. These must have been made between 1604 and 1623. Among these is the deletion of oaths, prescribed by the Act of 1606, e.g.:

$Q_2$	$F_{I}$
O God,	O heauen!
By heauen it is	It seemes it is
S' wounds show me	Come show me

Apart from these, the main changes are in the direction of reducing the number of actors

needed for the play. The Courtier and the Lord, both of whom are sent by the King to Hamlet (V. 11.), are replaced by Osric (the name given to the courtier in Q2). Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are cut out of Act IV, Sc. 1, by the simple omission of the fourth line. A Recorder is omitted (III. 11), and a Sailor (IV. vI.). The most extensive alteration of this kind is the omission of a Gentleman in IV. v.: his speeches are shared between Horatio and the Queen. FI thus represents a transcript of a "cut" version of Q2.



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### 4. THE FIRST QUARTO

In whatever way the First Quarto was composed, there is no suggestion of irregularity on the part of the publishers. Hamlet was entered in the Stationers' Register in the usual way, to James Roberts, on July 26, 1602. It appeared in 1603, at a date not later than May 19, which is the date of the licence by which the Chamberlain's company (whose name appears on the title-page) became the King's players. It was printed for Nicholas Ling and John Trundell, and the printer has been identified as Valentine Symmes.1 There is no irregularity in the introduction of Symmes in place of Roberts, who had entered the play, and the fact that the Second Quarto was published by Ling and printed by Roberts seems to show that, in the case of Q1, both had acted in good faith, believing that the Q1 text was really the copy of the Hamlet belonging to the Chamberlain's or King's men. In 1607 another entry concerning Hamlet appeared in the Stationers' Register, a transfer of the copyright to John Smethwick:

John Smythick. Entred for his copies vnder th[e h]andes of the wardens these bookes followinge Whiche dyd belonge to Nicholas Lynge [No] 6 A booke called Hamlett . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . vj<sup>d</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> By A. W. Pollard and H. R. Plomer.

This implies that the copyright was from the beginning in Ling's hands, and that Roberts entered the book for him in the Stationers' Register in 1602, but for some reason was unable to undertake the printing, which accordingly was given to Symmes.

The character of all the parties to the printing and publishing of QI is such as to justify this conclusion. Roberts printed quartos of three of Shakespeare's plays, all "good", and was for long in close relations with the Chamberlain's company. Symmes printed more of Shakespeare's quartos than any other printer: all are good texts, and well printed. Ling was a printer of many years' standing, while Smethwick was later associated with the publication of the First Folio.

The copy for the First Quarto, then, must have come into the hands of Ling from the Chamberlain's company, or from one of them, or as purporting to do so and to be a good text. Under precisely what circumstances this happened we do not know, and probably never shall.

Yet it is quite clear that Q1 is not a good text, but a pirated copy. The problem is to decide of what it is a piracy, and how and when, and if possible by whom, the piracy was made.

The First Quarto text differs widely from those of the Second Quarto and the First Folio. It is only about half the length of the other two—some 2000 lines as against their 4000. Several scenes

or incidents are transposed. The chief variation is that the "To be or not to be" soliloquy and the interview between Hamlet and Ophelia (III. 1.) precede in Q1 the "fishmonger" scene with Polonius and the entry of the players (II. 11.), and appear immediately after Polonius has suggested his scheme for throwing Ophelia in Hamlet's way. The scheme is thus tried almost without delay. At other points the characters are modified. The Queen is definitely innocent of the murder of her first husband, whereas in Q2 the extent of her guilt is left doubtful. In the closet-scene, for instance, she promises, in response to Hamlet's appeal, to assist him in his revenge (Q1, Sc. x1. 102 ff.):

Ham. And mother, but assist mee in reuenge,
And in his death your infamy shall die.
Queene. Hamlet, I vow by that maiesty,
That knowes our thoughts, and lookes into our hearts,
I will conceale, consent, and doe my best,
What stratagem soe're thou shalt deuise.

Scene xiv introduces a dialogue between Horatio and the Queen in which Horatio, who has just received a letter from Hamlet, conveys to her the news of her son's escape and return to Denmark. This scene is not found in Q2 or F1, and the information it conveys replaces the passage in which Horatio receives and reads Hamlet's letter. In this scene, too, the Queen continues the mood of repentance and reinforces her dislike and distrust

of the King. She says of him and his treachery to Hamlet:

Then I perceive there's treason in his lookes That seem'd to sugar o're his villanie: But I will soothe and please him for a time, For murderous mindes are alwayes jealous,

#### and of Hamlet:

. . . commend me
A mothers care to him, bid him a while
Be wary of his presence, lest that he
Faile in that he goes about.

Laertes is also less guilty. The suggestion of the poisoned rapier comes not from him, as in Q2 and F1, but from the King. Several of the names, also, are slightly or wholly altered. Laertes is Leartes, Polonius is called Corambis, and Reynaldo, Montano. Similar modifications have extended to proper names in the text of the play, Vienna becoming Guyana, and Gonzago, Albertus.

There are varying degrees of correspondence between Q1 and the other two texts. A few speeches and passages are altogether omitted. Some are reported accurately, others approximately, with transpositions of words and phrases and the substitution of synonyms for many words; others again preserve only a few scattered remnants of the "good" texts, while in many places a line or short passage has no correspondence whatever with anything in these texts.

Two main lines of explanation for these features of Q1 at present divide the field. These are generally called the "mutilation" theory and the "revision" theory. Both assume the existence of an old play, by Kyd or another, on the subject of Hamlet, the text of which is now lost. This old play is termed for convenience the Ur-Hamlet. Both theories agree also that the Ur-Hamlet formed the basis of Shakespeare's play. The revision theory holds that Shakespeare was revising the Ur-Hamlet, but that his revision had not got much beyond the second act at the time when the Q1 version was made. Later, Shakespeare is supposed to have completed his revision, thus producing the version given in Q2. This theory rests mainly on the superior report of the first two acts in Q1. A variation of this theory would have it that Shakespeare had completed his revision of the Ur-Hamlet when the report was made, and accounts for the inferior quality of the last three acts by the tiredness of the reporter, or some such reason. Sir E. K. Chambers summarised the latter form of the revision theory thus: "I believe that QI is Shakespeare's independent treatment of the subject suggested to him by the older play. If he borrowed anything beyond the outline of the plot, it was probably the fooling, meant to tickle the groundlings, at the end of 1. 5. It is true that the three last acts are not only more incoherent in themselves than the two earlier, but also that they depart more from Q2; but this is capable of many explanations. The reporter may have grown tired of his task. So far as the dialogue goes, in the few places where we get it uncorrupted there is nothing inconsistent with its being Shakespeare's. It is not all at his highest level; it may have been hastily written for a provincial tour, and one need hardly be surprised that what is retained in Q2 is better than what is rejected; but it does not, any of it, appear to have any affinity with the kind of thing that the pre-Shakespearian Hamlet probably was. . . . Almost all the details, the incidents, and touches of characterisation, the deep and imaginative sayings, are there at least in germ. I need only endorse Mr. Furnivall's remark, that if Q1 is not Shakespeare's, then 'the credit of three-fifths of the character of Hamlet, and about one-half of the working out of it, belong to the author of the old Hamlet".1

The revision theory allows for the use of short-hand in making the report, except of course where written parts, like that of Voltimand, were accessible. This theory is ingeniously defended by Dr. G. B. Harrison (Bodley Head Quartos, vii., 1923). The evidence for shorthand reports of Elizabethan plays rests chiefly on two passages of Thomas Heywood's, one in the Preface to the quarto of his Rape of Lucrece (1608), where he speaks of some of his plays coming accidentally

<sup>1</sup> Warwick ed., p. 220.

into the printer's hands "so corrupt and mangled (copied onely by the eare) that I have beene as vnable to know them, as ashamde to chalenge them"; the other in the reprint (1637) of his If you know not me, you know nobody, first published in 1605:

. . . some by stenography drew
The plot: put it in print: (Scarce one word trew:) 2

The only system of shorthand likely to be used in such a report was Bright's Characterie (1588), in which "key words called Characters are represented by simple symbols, additional strokes giving various different meanings. The key word in this way stands for all its synonyms, opposites, and homophones." Parallel lists of words and their characters are given. Assuming such a system, the numerous synonyms in Q1 are held to be accounted for. Gaps and bad reporting Dr. Harrison explains as due to the comparative speed of the actors' speech, the report failing in parts where the dialogue runs to rapid conversation or emotional agitation.

The mutilation theory, on the other hand, maintains that QI is an attempt to reproduce the *Hamlet* we know, either from the full Q2 version, or from the cut text of FI. This view, long out of fashion, has recently found an exponent in Mr. Crompton Rhodes in his *Shakespeare's First Folio* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Bodley Head Quartos, VII. xiii. <sup>2</sup> Ibid. <sup>3</sup> Ibid.

# (1923). His conclusions are summarised thus:

A. (i) The Hamlet of 1603 was printed from the prompt-book of a company of strolling players.

(ii) This prompt-book was made by the actor who had played Marcellus in Shakespeare's play with the Lord Chamberlain's Servants.

(iii) The player of Marcellus relied upon:-

(a) An accurate transcript of his own former part.

(b) His memory, which was stronger and fuller in the scenes where Marcellus played than those where he did not,

(c) And his invention where his memory failed.

B. The part of Hamlet had been altered for performance by a young man of nineteen.

C. His version owed no part of its construction or dialogue to any previous *Hamlet* except Shakespeare's.

Fortunately, it will not be necessary to discuss, correct, or confute these theories and their variations in detail. There are, in Q1, one or two salient facts that make clear the proper line of approach. It may be taken as established, e.g. by Professor Hubbard, that Q1 is an acting version, a prompt-copy. Although not a Good Quarto, it has yet all the marks of one. A Good Quarto, according to Professor Pollard, should have no divisions into acts and scenes, no elaborate or descriptive stage-

<sup>1</sup> Hubbard, The First Quarto of Hamlet, pp. 26-27.

directions, but occasionally stage-directions in the imperative. Q1 satisfies these requirements. There is one stage-direction in the imperative: "Sound trumpets" (p. 13); the others are short. The text shows no divisions into acts and scenes. That it is an effective acting copy has been proved in practice by the German actors and managers, Eduard and Otto Devrient.<sup>1</sup>

There are, indeed, inconsistencies in the action of Q1. But they are not such as would present enough difficulty to make the play impossible to act. And all the facts of the story are there, although in places it may be a slightly different story from that of Q2. Furnivall makes out a long list of the incidents of the play, to show that they are all present in Q1.2

This seems to point to the truth of Mr. Crompton Rhodes's theory that QI was printed from the prompt-book of a company of strolling players; and to rule out any possibility of a shorthand report. A shorthand reporter, besides, would be likely to neglect such stage-directions as "Sound trumpets", and must have had oppor-

<sup>1</sup> Deutscher Buhnen und Familien Shakespeare, by Eduard und Otto Devrient, Erster Band, Hamlet, Einleitung, pp. 7-10. Grant White (Intro. to Hamlet, p. 10) contests this conclusion, instancing the command, "And here Ofelia, reade you on this booke", given by Polonius, when Ophelia was not on the stage. But Grant White failed to notice what has been pointed out by Prof. Hubbard, that Ophelia was on the stage, her entry having been provided for about a hundred lines earlier by the direction, "Enter Corambis and Ofelia".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Griggs, Facsimile Reprint of Q2, pp. vi-viii.

tunities of correcting his report which should have produced a version superior to that of Q1. An actor in the provinces, however, would have no such opportunity, and would be likely to introduce such stage-directions as are necessary to the actor, but not to the reader.

Another salient feature of QI is established by an examination of the omissions and a comparison of these with the "cuts" in FI. Allowing for foreign matter (which will be dealt with later), nothing that is cut out of the Folio appears in QI, and the cuts coincide so exactly as to leave no doubt that the Quarto was based on a cut text, either the Folio text or the copy from which it was transcribed. There are two outstanding examples of this coincidence:

# (1) III. iv. 71-81

Q2 Ham. . . . and what iudgement
Would step from this to this, sence sure youe haue
Els could you not haue motion, but sure that
sence

Is appoplext, for madnesse would not erre
Nor sence to extacie was nere so thral'd
But it reseru'd some quantitie of choise
To serue in such a difference, what deuill wast
That thus hath cosund you at hodman blind;
Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight.
Eares without hands, or eyes, smelling sance all,
Or but a sickly part of one true sence
Could not so mope: ô shame where is thy blush?

In F1 this passage is cut thus:

Ham.. . . and what Iudgement

Would step from this, to this? [Cut]

What diuell was't

That thus hath cousend you at hoodman-blinde? [Cut]

O shame! where is thy blush? p. 271, col. 1

Q1 reflects the Folio cuts:

Ham. And this same haue you left to change with this. [Cut]

> What Diuell thus hath cosoned you at hob-man blinde?

[Cut]

P. 45

(2) III. iv. 161-170

FI Ham. Assume a Vertue, if you have it not, [Cut]

. . . refraine to night,

And that shall lend a kind of easinesse To the next abstinence.

[Cut]

Once more goodnight,

p. 271, col. 2

 $Q_1$  Ham.

[Cut]

Forbeare the adulterous bed tonight, And win your selfe by little as you may, [Cut]

p. 46

The same coincidence is found in the other, smaller cuts in F1. Apart, then, from the censored passages of topical bearing, Q1 shows no sign of acquaintance with any part of the fuller text of the Second Quarto that is not in the First Folio. It may, on occasions, be nearer to the Q2 text, owing to the fact that F1 is a transcript and has introduced errors. But it is clear that Q1 represents a cut version. The probability is that the full Q2 text was marked for the omissions at an early date, certainly before 1603, and that the pirate was acquainted with the shortened version only.

An apparent exception, to show that Q1 rested on a wider basis than F1, was pointed out by Grant White, who wrote, "The latter part of the line--'Tell him that Fortinbras, nephew to old Norway' (IV. 1v. 14) has no counterpart in the genuine speech; but we detect in it an unmistakable reminiscence of the following passage of the subsequent dialogue which is found in Q2 (but not in F1): 'Ham. Who commands them, sir? Cap. The Nephew to old Norway, Fortenbrasse.' "1 This seems plausible. But it is much more probable, and more in consonance with the coincidence of all the other cuts, to see in the phrase a reminiscence of I. 11. 28 and 30, where it has previously occurred as applying to Fortinbras. This scene was one in which, as will be shown, the pirate Voltimand was on the stage, and the phrase was one of those he remembered or copied from his "part", and set down in that scene also.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Furness, Variorum Hamlet, ii. 28.

Another slight indication that Q1 may rest on a version fuller than F1, is the line in Q2:

Lord. The King, and Queene, and all are comming downe. V. 11. 212

This is not represented in F1, but appears in Q1 as:

Gent. My Lord, presently, the king and her maiesty, With the rest of the best judgement in the Court, Are comming downe into the outward pallace.

Sc. xvIII, 30-32

But V. 11. 202-218 has been cut out of F1. Line 212 may well have been marked for retention in Q2 and copied in the actors' parts, as a kind of stage-direction indicating the approach of the Court. Hence its appearance in Q1. Occurring in the middle of a long "cut", however, it may easily have been overlooked by the transcriber of F1, working in a hurry, and seeing the whole passage, as he thought, marked for omission. Or it may easily, though less probably, have been omitted by the printer of F1, as it has been seen he omitted other lines and passages.

If this assumption of coincidence is correct, it should be possible from the Folio text to account for all the material in QI, to account for the use of synonyms, for transpositions, and other peculiarities, to show, in a word, that QI is a report of a cut version of Q2, or of a form of it in which the cuts were as they occur in FI. Matter foreign to both

FI and Q2 may be left aside for the moment, to be dealt with later.

It is in fact possible to account for all the peculiar features of QI, and to show that it is an attempt to reproduce the "cut" Hamlet, on the theory—and on no other—that the reproduction is made from memory. Reproductions from memory show transpositions of the order of words and incidents, the substitution of synonyms, considerable omissions, the introduction by association of foreign matter from similar sources (e.g. plays), and, in places, the production of unintelligible or nonsensical passages.

How a text may be shortened and altered in a memory-version is well illustrated by the following example, quoted by Mr. R. Crompton Rhodes, comparing the good with the pirated text of Sheridan's *Duenna*:

"According to the Oxford Edition, this is a colloquy between Don Jerome, his son, and daughter (Act I, Sc. 111.):

Jerome. Isaac Mendoza will be here presently, and to-morrow you shall marry him.

Louisa. Never while I have life.

Ferdinand. Indeed, sir, I wonder how you can think of such a man for your son-in-law.

Jerome. Sir, you are very kind to favour me with your sentiments. And pray, what is your objection to him?

Ferdinand. He is a Portuguese in the first place.

Jerome. No such thing, boy, he has forsworn the country.

Louisa. He's a Jew.

Jerome. Another mistake; he has been a Christian these six weeks.

Ferdinand. Ay, he left his religion for an estate, and has not had time to get a new one.

Louisa. But stands like a dead wall between church and synagogue, or like the blank leaves between the Old and New Testament.

Jerome. Anything more!

Ferdinand. But the most remarkable part of his character is his passion for deceit and tricks of cunning.

Louisa. Though at the same time the fool so much predominates over the knave that I am told he is generally the dupe of his own art.

Ferdinand. True, like an unskilful gunner, he usually misses his aim, and he's hurt by the recoil of his own piece.

Jerome. Anything more?

Louisa. To sum up, he has the worst fault a husband can have—he's not my choice.

Jerome. But you are his, and choice on one side is sufficient. Two lovers should never meet in marriage. Be you as sour as you please, he is sweet-tempered, and for your good fruit there's nothing like ingrafting on a crab.

In the Edition of 1797 this conversational trio dwindles into a duet of half the length, Ferdinand standing silently by:

Jerome. Louisa, to-morrow, child, I have determined you shall marry Isaac Mendoza, and then—

Louisa. O sir, do not make me miserable.

Jerome. Anything more?

Louisa. He's a Jew.

Jerome. That's a mistake, for he's changed his religion these six weeks! Anything more?

Louisa. Sir, he's a Portuguese.

Jerome. That's another mistake; for he has forsworn his country. Anything more?

Louisa. Sir, he has to me the greatest fault that ever a man had.

Jerome. Hey-day, what's that?

Louisa. He is my aversion.

Jerome. Louisa, I care not, I know he loves you, and he has the money. The best experiment in nature, to obtain good fruit, is to graft it on a crab."

Mr. Rhodes quotes, from Tate Wilkinson's Memoirs, the following account of how it was done:

"The only time I ever exercised my pen on such an occasion was on a trial of necessity. Mr. Harris bought that excellent comic opera of *The Duenna* from Mr. Sheridan. I saw it several times, and finding it impossible to move Mr. Harris's tenderness, I locked myself up in my room, set down first the jokes I remembered, then I laid a book of the songs before me, and with magazines kept the regulation of the scenes, and by the help of a numerous collection of obsolete Spanish plays I produced an excellent opera; I may say excellent—and an unprecedented compilement; for whenever Mr. Younger, or any other country manager wanted a copy of *The Duenna*, Mr. Harris told them they might play Mr. Wilkinson's: hundreds have seen it in every town in Great Britain and Ireland."

This Sheridan piracy shows all the features of R. Crompton Rhodes, Plays and Poems of Sheridan, i. 256-257.

4

Hamlet QI that are possible, since Wilkinson was not himself a practising actor:

- (1) Abbreviation.
- (2) Transposition of words and phrases, e.g. Jew and Portuguese.
- (3) Use of synonyms, e.g. changed his religion for has been a Christian.
- (4) Tendency to nonsense or unintelligibility, e.g. the premature introduction of Anything more? and the lack of point in the last sentence through the omission of Two lovers . . . sour . . . sweet, in the previous sentence.
- (5) Additions to express stage business, or from other parts or facts of the play, e.g. Do not make me miserable, and He has the money.

Wilkinson kept the regulation of the scenes with magazines. But without their assistance, he could as easily have confused their order as he has confused the order of single words. Especially where there is no relation of cause and effect between the incidents in successive scenes, where for example they are supposed to happen simultaneously, the memory is very liable to confuse the order. Try, as an experiment of this kind, to write down from memory these scenes from Macbeth, in their correct order: The murder of Lady Macduff, Macbeth's second visit to the

Witches, the sleep-walking scene, and the dialogue between Lennox and a Lord about Macbeth's crimes. The following, written from memory, is a good actual example of how transposition happens:

In the extract quoted, Wilkinson does not either, so far as can be seen, introduce any matter not in the original play. But if he had had in his mind the "parts" of various other plays, he might have done so.

All the peculiarities of Q1 are thus capable of being derived from memory and its weakness. A few outstanding examples from Q1 will be sufficient to illustrate the working of the pirate's memory, and its associations.

Transpositions, based on association of ideas, are numerous. In the order of the incidents, the chief change is the meeting of Hamlet and Ophelia immediately after it has been suggested by Polonius. This is a natural slip due to a misleading association. Grant White gives the exact explanation: "The circumstance that in two scenes Hamlet enters just as the same personages (the King, the Queen,

and Ophelia's father) leave the stage, misled the purloiner of the text for the first edition into the supposition that the old courtier's suggestion in the earlier scene was immediately followed".

The transposition of phrases may be found almost anywhere. For example, the ambassadors ask Hamlet the cause of his "distemper" (III. 11. 350-354):

Q2 Ros. Good my Lord, what is your cause of distemper, . . .

Ham. Sir, I lacke aduauncement.

In Q1 this is transferred to Hamlet's first meeting with the ambassadors (II. 11.):

Ham. Come, you were sent for.

Ros. My lord, we were, and willingly if we might,

Know the cause and ground of your discontent.

Ham. Why I want preferment. Sc. VII. 52-55

At other points lines, given correctly, tend to recur when recalled by the context. Q1 gives correctly the line (III. 111. 90):

Or in the incestuous pleasure of his bed,

But later (III. IV. 92), where Q2 reads

In the ranck sweat of an inseemed bed.

QI substitutes the previous line, with a slight alteration to suit the context:

To liue in the incestuous pleasure of his bed?

A passage of several lines (V. 11. 172 ff.) is similarly reproduced, both at the correct point, and also in

Act IV, Sc. vii, where the King first broaches the subject of the duel to Laertes.

The most interesting example of confusion between two passages, of similar import, and both represented in both quartos, is the following:

Q2

I. 111. 86-87

Oph. Tis in my memory lockt

And you your selfe shall keepe the *key* of it.

II. 1. 108-110

Oph. as you did commaund

I did repell his *letters*, and *denied* His accesse to me.

II. 11. 142-144

Pol. and then I prescripts gaue her

That she should *locke* her selfe from her resort,

Admit no messengers, receive no tokens,

 $Q_I$ 

I. 111. (Sc. 111)

Cor. Ofelia, receive none of his letters

Refuse his tokens, both of them are keyes

To *unlocke* Chastitie vnto Desire . . .

II. 11. (Sc. 111)

Cor. Therefore I did commaunde her refuse his letters, Deny his tokens, and to absente her selfe.

In addition to such transpositions of phrase and incident, the text of the "cut" Hamlet underwent other transmutations during its filtration

through the mind and memory of the pirate. The main such transmutations are:

(1) The replacement of a word by one of its synonyms, e.g.:

•	QI	Q2 FI
I. 11. 195	wonder	maruell
I. 11. 238	pace	haste
I. IV. 72	shape	forme
II. 11. 529	kercher	clout

- (2) Actions remembered from the play are put into the dialogue, e.g.:
  - (a) Sc. x1. l. 7

Hamlet. I'le tell you, but first weele make all safe. (Hamlet shuts the door of his mother's room.)

(b) Sc. x1. ll. 115-116

Queene. But then he throwes and tosses me about, As one forgetting that I was his mother:

(c) Sc. xIII. l. 73

Ofelia. Wel God a mercy, I a bin gathering of floures:

- (3) The sense is often perverted, in places so badly as to produce nonsense, e.g.:
  - Q2 (on the death of Polonius, III. 1v. 213) this Counsayler

Is now most still, most secret, and most graue,

QI Come sir, I'le prouide for you a graue.

The King contradicts himself in his remarks on Hamlet (II. 11., Sc. v1. ll. 1-3):

QI that our deere cosin Hamlet
Hath lost the very heart of all his sence,
It is most right, and we most sory for him:

De Groot has pointed out other instances where the pirate's inability to grasp the subject-matter of the dialogue has resulted in nonsense or contradiction. At V. 1. 106, for example, Hamlet considers three skulls, the second of which is a lawyer's and the third that of a "buyer of land". The Q1 text merges the characteristics attributed to these two:

now where is your Quirkes and quillets now, your vouchers and Double vouchers, your leases and free-holde,

"Quirkes and quillets" refers to the lawyer, the rest to the buyer of land. The same confusion is continued in the lines:

Ifaith they prooue themselues sheepe and calues That deale with them, or put their trust in them.

Those "that deale with them" are the lawyers, those that "trust in them" (parchment documents) are the landowners.

The only point at which the pirate did not require to rely on his memory is the single speech of Voltimand (II. 11. 60-80), which is reproduced with almost literal exactness.

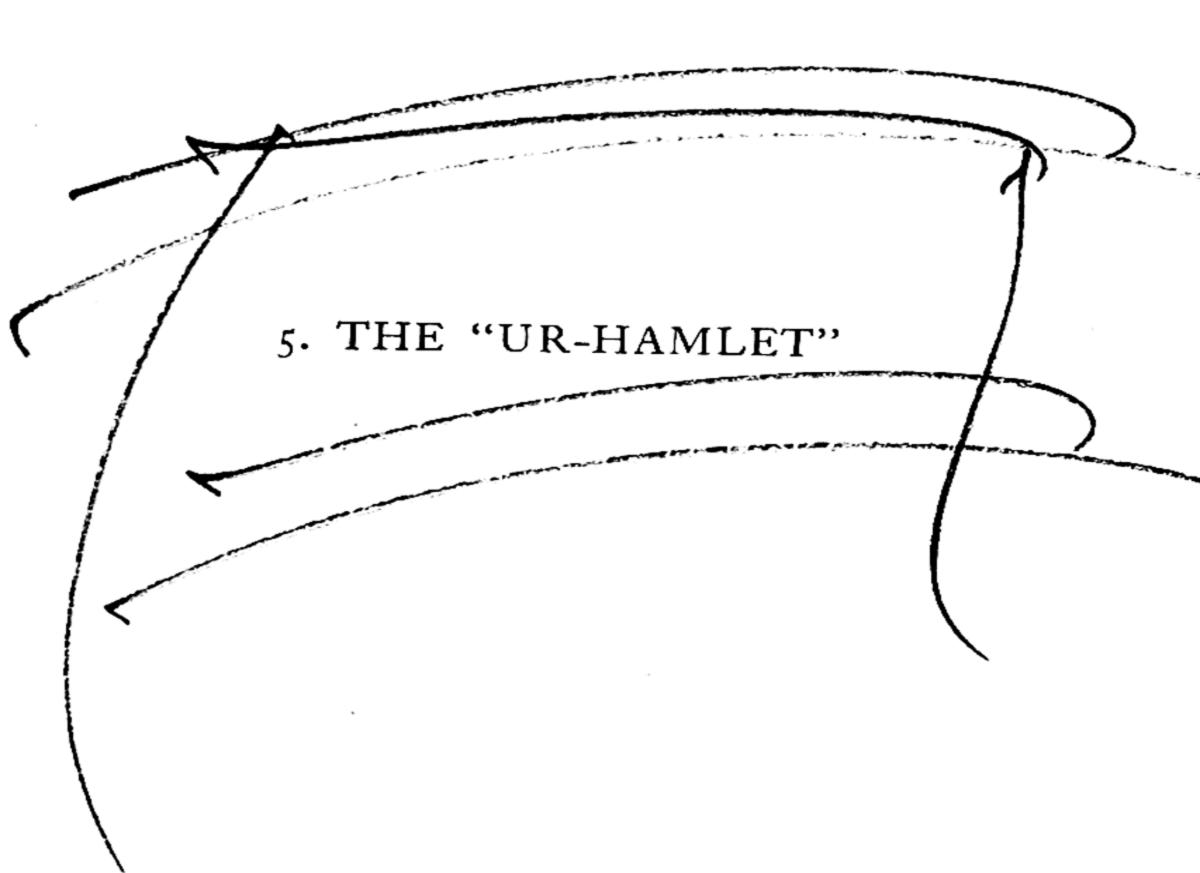
Thus the bulk of QI is accounted for, on the assumption that it is based on a "cut" text or version of the play, supplemented by the "part" of Voltimand. No shorthand or revision theory can account satisfactorily for all the features of QI, especially the transpositions. These theories

<sup>1</sup> H. de Groot, Hamlet: Its Textual History (Amsterdam, 1923).

would require to suppose that either Shakespeare or the reporter cut up his manuscript into small pieces (in certain scenes), some consisting of half a page, some of a few lines, some of a line or a word, and made a jig-saw puzzle, which in places he failed to solve satisfactorily. Even so, the repetition of lines and phrases is not explained. And this cannot well be attributed to revision: it cannot be argued that the passages occurred twice in an older version, and that Shakespeare, on working it over, noticed the repetition and deleted them. No author would, without evident effect or point, make such literal repetitions; they are clearly the work of association of ideas in the mind of a much less literate pirate-actor.

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#### 5. THE "UR-HAMLET"

The remaining problem is to identify the un-Shakespearian matter in Q1. If it can be shown to consist of echoes from other plays or "parts" in the repertory of the pirate-actor, then Q1 is established as a memory-piracy, and the identification of the plays in which they occur may assist towards further conclusions on the genesis and stage-history of *Hamlet* and the career of Shakespeare. With the exception of some twenty lines, this identification has proved merely a matter of patience; and the belief in an *Ur-Hamlet* has thus lost all probability.

This belief rests principally on the reference to Hamlet by Thomas Nashe in his Epistle "To the Gentlemen Students of both Vniuersities", prefixed to Robert Greene's Menaphon. The book was entered on the Stationers' Register on August 23, 1589, and published in the same year. The passage runs:

"It is a common practise now a daies, amongst a sort of shifting companions, that runne through every art and thrive by none to leave the trade of Noverint, whereto they were borne, and busie themselves with the indevors of art, that could scarcelie latinise their neck-verse if they should

haue neede; yet English Seneca read by candlelight yeeldes manie good sentences as 'bloud is a begger' and so forth: and if you intreate him faire in a frostie morning, he will affoord you whole Hamlets, I should say handfulls of tragical speeches. But o griefe! tempus edax rerum; what's that will last alwaies? The sea exhaled by droppes will in continuance be drie, and Seneca let bloud line by line, and page by page, at length must needes die to our stage: which makes his famisht followers to imitate the Kidde in Aesop, who enamored with the Foxes newfangles, forsooke all hopes of life to leape into a new occupation; and these men renowncing all possibilities of credit or estimation, to intermeddle with Italian translations: wherein how poorelie they haue plodded (as those that are neither prouenzall men nor are able to distinguish of Articles) let all indifferent Gentlemen that have trauailed in that tongue discerne by their twopenie pamphlets: and no meruaile though their home-born mediocritie be such in this matter; for what can be hoped of those that thrust Elisium into hell, and haue not learned, as long as they haue liued in the spheares, the iust measure of the Horizon without an hexameter. Sufficeth them to bodge up a blanke verse with ifs and ands, and other while for recreation after their candle stuffe, hauing starched their beards most curiouslie, to make a peripateticall path into the inner parts of the Citie, and spend two or three howers in

turning over French Doudie, where they attract more infection in one minute than they can do eloquence all dayes of their life, by conversing with anie Authors of like argument."

This passage is quite clearly directed against Kyd among others. Kyd was a scrivener and the son of a scrivener, and so born to the trade of Noverint (the word with which his documents began). He is as good as mentioned by name in the allusion to "the Kidde in Aesop". He had busied himself with "the indeuors of art". He had drawn freely on Seneca in his plays. He had leapt "into a new occupation" by turning translator. He issued, in the year 1594, a translation of the Cornelie of Garnier, and, in 1588, of Tasso's Il Padre di Famiglia. The numerous blunders in these translations justify the remarks on "homebred mediocritie" and "how poorelie they have plodded". The reference to "ifs and ands" is to Kyd's Spanish Tragedy, II. 1. 77, where Lorenzo cries to Pedringano, "What, Villaine, ifs and ands?" Kyd also "thrust Elisium into hell" in The Spanish Tragedie, I. 1. 73, where he represents the "faire Elizian greene" as one of the regions of the lower world.

The references are so clear and so sustained that Prof. F. S. Boas, in his introduction to Kyd's works, says—what is hardly justified—that not only does the passage point to Kyd, but that "so elaborate an indictment could only be aimed

at a single personage". The use of the plural, therefore, "is evidently a mere rhetorical device". Prof. Boas naturally infers that Kyd must be the author of the *Ur-Hamlet* to which Nashe refers.

Kyd's supposed authorship of the Ur-Hamlet is supported by the similarity of the First Quarto of Hamlet to The Spanish Tragedy. The original story in the Histoires tragiques of Belleforest, or in the Latin of Saxo Grammaticus, has been developed and enlarged, in the First Quarto, along the lines of Senecan drama. The Ghost is introduced. "Tragicall speeches", in the Senecan manner, abound. The two stories are closely parallel. Ofelia is lectured by Leartes and Corambis (Polonius) as Bel-imperia by her father and brother. Leartes goes to Paris, like Lorenzo. The catastrophe in both plays is attempted, in Hamlet unsuccessfully, in The Spanish Tragedy successfully, by the device of a play within the play. Hamlet entertains a luckless passion for Ofelia, as Balthazar does for Bel-imperia. Hamlet and Leartes seek vengeance for a murdered father, as Hieronimo and Bazulto seek justice for a murdered son. The ambassadors in The Spanish Tragedie pass to and fro between Spain and Portugal, with "articles" relating to the Viceroy's son, as they do in Hamlet between Denmark and Norway with articles relating to the Norwegian king's nephew. Thus the original story of Hamlet has been re-cast,

<sup>1</sup> Boas, Kyd, xx.

apparently by Kyd, on a plan closely resembling that of Kyd's Spanish Tragedy.1

This argument is, up to a point, perfectly sound. There is little doubt that Kyd was an object of attack. Dr. M'Kerrow, indeed, counters with the objection that in other passages Nashe has been accused of making similar punning allusions where, as he himself protested, he had no such intention. But negative instances of this kind have no weight against the obvious fact that such punning was indeed a favourite device with Nashe and that other examples actually occur in the same Epistle. This for instance: "But fortune the Mistres of change with a pitying compassion, respecting Master Stanihursts praise, would that Phaer shoulde fall that hee might rise, whose heroicall Poetrie infired, I should say inspired, with an hexameter furie, recalled to life, whateuer hissed barbarisme, hath bin buried this hundred yeare". Dr. J. Dover Wilson, also, in his introduction to the New Cambridge Hamlet, points out that the "Kidde" reference has been as it were dragged in by the hair, and that if it does not refer to Thomas Kyd it ceases to have any point whatever.

Professor Boas does, however, seem to force the meaning of the passage when he confines its reference to Kyd alone. "A sort of shifting companions" seems clearly enough to be directed

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., xlvi-xlviii.

against a group, and not, as he suggests, against only one author. "Sort", as Dr. McKerrow points out, means, in Elizabethan usage, a group. Which, but for the prevailing assumption that it was not Shakespeare but Kyd who wrote the Hamlet referred to, Professor Boas might have conceded.

Nashe's allusion, then, was to Kyd and others who wrote Senecan plays like The Spanish Tragedy. Assume that the early Hamlet, or Ur-Hamlet, was written by Shakespeare, and the intention of the passage in Nashe is simple. He was attacking at least two "Senecan" dramatists, Kyd and Shakespeare, both non-university men and therefore scarcely able to "latinise their neck-verse", but popular enough to oust Greene and the University wits from what they considered their rightful pre-eminence in the dramatic world. Nashe, also, was attacking Shakespeare in a preface to a work of Greene's, just as three years later Greene, in his Groats-worth of Witte, was to make a similar attack for himself.

Fortunately this view of Nashe's reference need not remain a mere assumption. It can be checked by other evidence—the very evidence that has until now been used to support the idea of an *Ur-Hamlet* written by Kyd. There exist in the First Quarto of *Hamlet* (Q1) a number of parallels to The Spanish Tragedy of Thomas Kyd, parallels

<sup>1</sup> Nashe, iv. 448.

which do not occur in the good texts (Q2, F1). These were first pointed out by Sarrazin (Anglia, 1889-92: xii, xiii, xiv), and formed the basis of his theory that the Ur-Hamlet which he postulated was also written by Kyd, and that when Shakespeare made his postulated revision of the old play, these passages were among those which he discarded. Nine parallels have been pointed out:

(1) Balthasar. I, but perhaps she hopes some nobler mate. S.T., II. 1. 26

Duke. Thou maist (perchance) haue a more noble mate.

## Q1, IX. 111

(2) Bel-imperia. Hieronimo, I will consent, conceale, And ought that may effect for thine auaile, Ioyne with thee to reuenge Horatioes death.

Hieronimo. On then; whatsoeuer I deuise, Let me entreat you, grace my practises:

S.T., IV. 1. 46-50

Queene. Hamlet, I vow by that maiesty...
I will conceale, consent, and doe my best,
What stratagem soe're thou shalt deuise.

Q1, XI. 104-107

(3) Bel-imperia. Thou hast preuailde; ile conquer my misdoubt,

And in thy loue and councell drowne my feare: S.T., II. IV. 20-21

Leartes. You haue preuail'd my Lord, a while I'le striue,

To bury griefe within a tombe of wrath.

Q1, XIII. 122-123

(4) Lorenzo. And how for that?

Hieronimo. Marrie, my good Lord, thus:

Lorenzo. O, excellent!

S.T., IV. 1. 74 and 126

Leartes. And how for this? King. Mary Leartes thus:

Leartes. T'is excellent.

Q1, XV. 14-15, 37

- (5) Bel-imperia. You meane to try my cunning then . . . S.T., IV. 1. 178

  King. He might be once tasked for to try your cunning.

  Q1, XV. 13
- (6) Hieronimo. To drowne thee with an ocean of my teares?

Hieronimo. To know the author were some ease of greife,

For in reuenge my hart would find releife.

S.T., II. v. 23 and 40-41

Leartes. Therefore I will not drowne thee in my teares,

Reuenge it is must yeeld this heart releefe, For woe begets woe, and griefe hangs on griefe.

Q1, XV. 53-55

- (7) Hieronimo. Ile say his dirge, singing fits not this case. S.T., II. v. 67.
  - Priest. She hath had a Dirge sung for her maiden soule: Q1, XVI, 131
- (8) Lorenzo. Hieronimo, I neuer gaue you cause.
  S.T., III. xiv. 148

Hamlet. I neuer gaue you cause:

Q1, XVI. 164

(9) Castile. But heere, before Prince Balthazar and me, Embrace each other, and be perfect freends.

S.T., III. xiv. 154-155

King. Come Gertred, wee'l haue Leartes, and our sonne,

Made friends and Louers, as befittes them both. Q1, XVII. 8-9

From these parallels it is quite clear that some connection does exist between *Hamlet* and *The Spanish Tragedy*. Professor Boas's comparison of their plots, however, had already made that clear. It is the nature of the connection that is in dispute and has been taken for granted. The similarity of the plays in itself is suspicious: so is the similarity of the parallel phrases. An author seldom repeats himself so exactly. Nor again is it likely that Shakespeare, in his supposed revision of the play, would recognise precisely those phrases—all nine of them—where Kyd had repeated himself from *The Spanish Tragedy*, and discard them.

It has not, however, been remarked that—as may be seen at a glance—all the nine passages above quoted from *The Spanish Tragedy* are drawn from a limited number of scenes—five, to be exact—and that in all of these Lorenzo<sup>1</sup> appears. In six of the nine instances, he is actually on the stage: in two, he is in the wings ready to come on; and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> It is a possible alternative that the actor played Balthazar, who accompanies Lorenzo in these scenes. The identification, however, does not matter greatly: the main point is that in all the five scenes concerned, one or more characters are present.

in the remaining instance, he is in the arbour, just off the main stage. The Q1 passages are therefore not signs of Kyd's authorship, not remains of the supposed *Ur-Hamlet*, but instances of the tricks played by the association of ideas and phrases in the memory of the actor who played Lorenzo in *The Spanish Tragedy*. That such associations are so numerous is due to the similarity of the two plays.

The most interesting and the most important of these associations is the second. Bel-imperia's complicity in Hieronimo's plan of vengeance has, by association, been transferred by the pirate to Gertrude and Hamlet. Thus what was supposed to be one of Shakespeare's alterations of the Ur-Hamlet turns out to be nothing more than a faulty association of the two situations. The same explanation applies to the ninth and the attempted reconciliation of Hamlet and Leartes, which in Q1 imitates that of Hieronimo and Lorenzo.

The parallels between The Spanish Tragedy and the First Quarto of Hamlet are thus no evidence of Kyd's authorship of the latter or of any text underlying it. They are merely a proof that some actor had played a "part" in Kyd's play and in Hamlet, and that he had tried, in Q1, to reconstruct a text of Hamlet from memory. Other similar parallels or recollections from other plays—collectively accounting for practically all the extraneous matter in Q1—are given below and confirm the

assignment of the Kyd parallels to one "part" by falling naturally, where they are derived in sufficient number from any one play, into speeches by the same character, or at least into scenes in which a common character is present.

J. D. Fitzgerald<sup>1</sup> has made it clear that the pirate of *Hamlet Q1* played a part in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. In Act I., Scene 1., Slender says:

I bruised my shin ... with playing at sword and dagger...; three veneys for a dish of stewed prunes; The pirate, confusing this passage with that in *Hamlet* where Osric says the King has wagered that in a dozen passes Laertes "shall not exceede you (Hamlet) three hits", makes the King say:

I'le lay a wager,
... that in twelue venies

You gaine not three of him:

Hamlet QI, XV. 15-19

After the short second scene comes one in which Falstaff and his minions appear. It is Falstaff's description of Page's wife as "a region in Guiana, all gold and bounty", that is responsible for guyana instead of Vienna in Q1, IX. 140. Again, where Hamlet says, "The phrase would bee more Ierman to the matter" (V. 11. 165), the pirate, remembering the famous pun on "cozen-germans" in The Merry Wives, IV. v. 70, writes the passage thus:

The worde had beene more cosin german to the phrase, . . . Hamlet QI, XVIII. 21

<sup>1</sup> Proc. Royal Phil. Soc. Glasgow, xlvii. 138-173, "Three Pirated Plays of Shakespeare".

Othello, as Mr. Alfred Hart<sup>1</sup> has shown, supplies the following echoes:

Nay pitty me not, but to my vnfolding Lend thy listning eare.

Hamlet QI, IV. 74-75

The Second Quarto of Hamlet reads:

Pitty me not but lend thy serious hearing To what I shall vnfold.

Hamlet Q2, I. v. 5-6

The First Quarto has clearly drawn on Desdemona's words:

Most gracious Duke, To my vnfolding, lend your prosperous eare. Othello, I. 111. 242-243

Again, Othello's

And let the labouring Barke climbe hills of Seas Olympus high. II. 1. 185-186

has provided the pirate with a phrase in the passage:

Lear. Forbeare the earth a while: sister farewell:

Leartes leapes into the graue

Now powre your earth on Olympus hie And make a hill to o're top olde Pellon:

Hamlet QI, XVI. 141-143

In Q2 the passage reads:

Laer. hold off the earth a while,
Till I haue caught her once more in mine armes;

1 T.L.S., October 10, 1935.

Now pile your dust vpon the quicke and dead, Till of this flat a mountaine you have made To'retop old *Pelion*, or the skyesh head Of blew *Olympus*.

V. 1. 272-276

Other phrases in the First Quarto may also be derived from Othello, for example, "I never gave you cause" (XVI. 164; Oth. V. 11. 302, III. IV. 158), and "This is a change indeede" (XIII. 41; Oth. IV. 11. 107); but similar phrases occur in other Elizabethan plays, and it is not possible to be quite certain.

The chief echo of *Henry V* has already been pointed out by Sarrazin. The pirate seems to have acted the King in this play, since his reminiscences are from three of Henry's speeches. Where *Hamlet Q2* reads:

King. Hamlet this deede for thine especiall safety Which we do tender, as we deerely grieue For that which thou hast done, must send thee hence. Therefore prepare thy selfe,

The Barck is ready, and the wind at helpe.

Hamlet Q2, IV. 111. 42-46 the pirate has associated with this the similar

the pirate has associated with this the similar passage in Henry V:

King. Now sits the wind fair, and we will aboard . . . King. We'll yet enlarge that man,

Though Cambridge, Scroop and Grey, in their dear

And tender preservation of our person Would have him punish'd. . . .

<sup>1</sup> But compare the eighth echo from Kyd, quoted above.

King. We will aboard to night.

Henry V, II. 11. 12, 57-60, 71

The result is the passage in Q1:

King. Well sonne Hamlet, we in care of you; but specially in tender preservation of your health, The which we price even as our proper selfe, It is our minde you forthwith goe for England, The wind sits faire, you shall aboorde to night.

Hamlet QI, Sc. XI. 155-159

Mr. Crompton Rhodes has pointed out an unmistakable reminiscence of Twelfth Night:

such men often proue

Great in their wordes, but little in their loue.

Hamlet QI, III. 69-70

for still we prove

Much in our vows, but little in our love.

Twelfth Night, II. IV. 116-117

Two borrowings from King John are also evident: the first:

. . . to seale damnation.

Hamlet Q1, XI. 53

. . . then shall this hand and seal Witness against us to damnation!

King John, IV. 11. 217-218

and the second:

His garters lagging downe, his shooes vntide, And fixt his eyes so stedfast on my face . . . Small while he stoode, but gripes me by the wrist.

Hamlet Q1, V. 44-45, 47

And he that speaks doth gripe the hearer's wrist.

King John, IV. 11. 190

1 Shakespeare's First Folio, p. 80.

"Shooes vntide" may be suggested by "slippers . . . falsely thrust upon contrary feet" in the same passage in King John.

There is a fairly definite echo from 2 Henry IV:

Ham. . . . thou would'st not thinke how ill all's heere about my hart, but it is no matter.

Hamlet Q2, V. 11. 222-223

Ham. Beleeue me Horatio, my hart is on the sodaine Very sore all here about.

Hamlet Q1, XVIII. 38-39

Mowbray. You wish me health in very happy season; For I am, on the sudden, something ill.

2 Henry IV, IV, 11. 79-80

The pirate had evidently played the part of Talbot in I Henry VI, and doubled with the Shepherd, Joan's father. The common phrases of QI are all here: I am content; what remedy?; take my leave; irks (wounds, kills) my heart; with all my heart. The following are the most prominent reminiscences:

- (a) Talbot: The scarecrow that affrights our children so.

  1 Henry VI, I. IV. 43
- (b) Lucy (Talbot is on the stage). It were enough to fright the realm of France:

Were but his *picture* left amongst you here, It would *amaze* the proudest of you all.

1 Henry VI, IV. vII. 82-84

Hamlet QI, through the association of the word picture, and of fright-affright, has, in the passage where Hamlet asks the Queen to look on "this

picture and on that", a line which describes the King's face as one

To affright children and amaze the world:

Hamlet QI, XI. 41

Compare also:

Talbot. . . . heavens keep old Bedford safe!

I Henry VI, III. II. 100

Queene. . . . heau'ns keep my Hamlet safe:

Hamlet QI, XIII. 5

From 2 Henry VI, Gloucester's address to the peers as

pillars of the state

(I. 1. 70)

appears in Hamlet QI in the King's description of Hamlet as

the chiefest piller of our state.

(XIII. 59)

The Q1 scene of Horatio's dialogue with the Queen concerning Hamlet:

he hath appoynted me To meete him on the easte side of the Cittie

To morrow morning.

Hamlet QI, XIV. 15-17

can hardly be anything but a variation of the Cardinal's challenge to Gloucester, and his appointment to meet him:

an if thou darest,

This evening, on the east side of the grove.

2 Henry VI, II. 1. 42-43

A scene in Pericles is the source of at least one

un-Shakespearian passage in *Hamlet Q1*. Lysimachus inquires the cause of Pericles' despondency, just as Rosencrantz inquires the cause of Hamlet's madness. The pirate, who played Lysimachus, associated the two situations and confused the parts:

Ros. Good my Lord, what is your cause of distemper? Q2, III, 11. 350

Ross. My good lord, let vs againe intreate

To know of you the ground and cause of your distemperature.

Hamlet QI, IX. 187-188

Lys. Upon what ground is his distemperature? . . .

Lys. Yet once more

Let me entreat to know at large the cause Of your king's sorrow.

Pericles, V. 1. 27, 60-62

It is clear that the pirate also played the part of King Edward in Marlowe's Edward II, which was printed in 1594 as belonging to Pembroke's company. A number of the phrases commonly used in addressing the King in Edward II appear in many places in the First Quarto of Hamlet, e.g. "I humbly thank your majesty", "And thus most humbly do we take our leave", "In sign of love and duty to this presence". The other reminiscences, with one exception, occur during the King's presence on the stage. Edward, in preparation for the return of Gaveston, his favourite, recalled from Ireland, orders "a general tilt and tournament" to celebrate his return and the

(temporary) cessation of his barons' hostility:

K. Edw. Spare for no cost, we will requite your loue. Warwick. In this, or ought, your highnes shall commaund vs.

K. Edw. Thankes gentle Warwick.

Edward II, 680-682

The King, in Hamlet QI, finding that Hamlet has given order for a play, and pleased at this sign of mirth and, presumably, returning sanity, directs Rossencraft and Gilderstone to

King. Seeke still to increase his mirth,
Spare for no cost, our coffers shall be open,
And we vnto your selues will still be thankefull.
Both. In all wee can, be sure you shall commaund.
Queene. Thankes gentlemen. . . .

Hamlet QI, VIII. 14-18

"Spare for no cost" is a stock phrase occurring in several other Elizabethan dramas: but for the four ideas: "spare for no cost", "requite your loue", "you shall commaund", and "thankes", or "will be thankefull," none of which is represented in the corresponding passage in the good texts of *Hamlet*, to recur in the same order, is more than a coincidence.

Again, Ophelia, returning Hamlet's love-tokens, says:

My Lord, I haue sought opportunitie, which now I haue, to redeliuer to your worthy handes, a small remembrance, such tokens which I haue received of you.

Hamlet QI, VI. 140-142

Dr. J. Dover Wilson has discovered in this passage a piece of the *Ur-Hamlet*, overlarded by the reporter. He rewrites it thus as a piece of the original blank verse:<sup>1</sup>

My Lord, I have sought opportunitie To redeliuer to your worthy handes, Such tokens which I have received of you.

Actually, part of the Q1 passage is a cue of King Edward's, occurring at the end of a tenline speech by Arundel:

I will this vndertake, to have him hence, And see him re-deliuered to your hands.<sup>2</sup> Edward II, 1420-1421

This is combined with the regular version:

My Lord, I have remembrances of yours That I have longed long to redeliuer, I pray you now receive them.

Hamlet Q2, III. 1. 93-95

and the result appears in Q1. A glance at *Hamlet Q2*, II. 11. 144 will explain the phrase "such tokens which I have received of you".

The First Quarto, again, in the famous soliloquy, speaks of

The vndiscouered country. . . .

Whol'd beare the scornes and flattery of the world?

Hamlet QI, VI. 123, 126

which is obviously influenced by the recollection

<sup>1</sup> The Library, June 1918.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. also Hamlet QI, VI. 68-69.

of the similar passage in Edward II:

That scornes the world, and as a traueller, Goes to discouer countries yet vnknowne.

Edward II, 2633-2634

Edward's dying words:

Assist me sweete God, and receive my soule

Edward II, 2557

find an echo in Q1 in Hamlet's last speech: Farewel Horatio, heauen receiue my soule.

Hamlet QI, XVIII. 108

A few other phrases in the First Quarto are also possibly due to this play, but call for no special comment, and do not conflict with the general conclusion, that the pirate of the First Quarto of *Hamlet* acted King Edward in *Edward II*.

The pirate was also acquainted with Chapman's An Humorous Day's Mirth. But, as might be expected from the abstract and speculative quality of Chapman's work, the echoes are confined to single words and short phrases. The most obvious of these is:

· A King of shreds and patches,

Hamlet Q2, III. IV. 102

A king of clouts, a scarecrow, . . .

Chapman, An Humorous Day's Mirth Sc. 7, 1. 7

. . . a king of clowts, of very shreads.

Hamlet QI, XI. 49

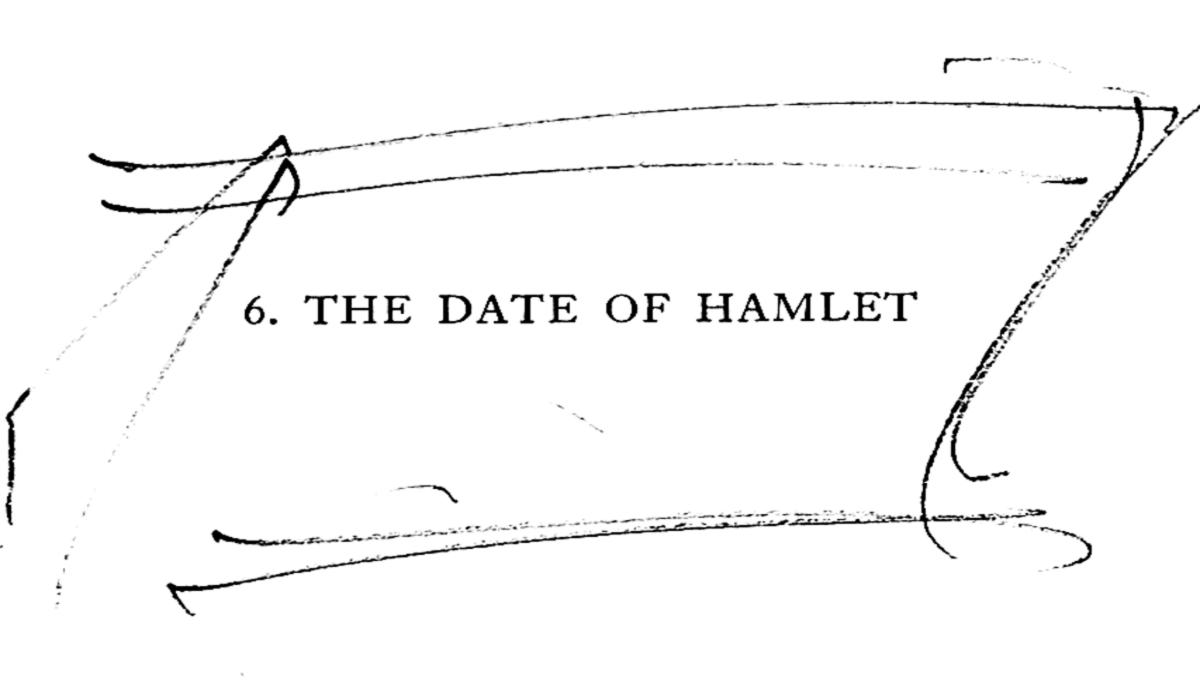
A few further possible echoes also occur to these and other plays: but they are either not certain enough to produce here as evidence, or they are stock phrases that occur in a number of plays by various authors. The pirate must have heard them frequently.

The echoes given above, however, have not been found (with the one exception noted) in any other Elizabethan play than that quoted. It is of course, possible that one or two may be so found, but the presence of so many found only in one source seems conclusive evidence of their manner of origin.

These echoes account for most of the un-Shakespearian matter in the First Quarto of Hamlet. It is probable that the lines still unidentified belong to some play now lost, or that they are, in whole or in part, the invention of the pirate; or indeed, that they may still be identified. However that may be, it need not hinder the assumption, which seems sufficiently justified, that QI is a piracy, made from memory, of the version known as FI.

Further, there is now no reason, that can be derived from QI, to suppose that there was any Ur-Hamlet, or that Kyd was its author; if it ever existed, it might even more safely be attributed to Shakespeare himself, or, with equal justification, to Marlowe, or Chapman, from all of whom echoes have been found in the First Quarto.

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## 6. THE DATE OF HAMLET

Since, then, the material peculiar to the first Quarto may be explained as consisting of echoes of other plays, since differences of arrangement and other features are the product of a faulty memory, and since there is no other evidence of any other play of Hamlet, it may be assumed, until a new case can be shown to the contrary, that Shakespeare's Hamlet and no other is the play mentioned by Nashe in 1589 and Henslowe in 1594. There are, indeed, a few scattered shreds of external evidence that have been used to support the case for an Ur-Hamlet as the basis of Shakespeare's play. There are also a number of topical references and of peculiarities in the play itself that have been interpreted in such a waypost factum—as to lend an air of probability to the current theories. It remains to show that these are not inconsistent with a date as early as 1589.

The chief external difficulty is the catch-word, "Hamlet, revenge". It is quoted in several contemporary works, both before and after the issue of the First and Second Quartos. It first appears in 1596, in Lodge's Wit's miserie, and the World's madnesse: "Hate Virtue is a foul lubber, and looks as pale as the wisard of the ghost, which cried so

miserally at the Theator, like an oister-wife, *Hamlet*, revenge". Dekker, in his Satiromastix (1602), acted by the Chamberlain's Men, has the passage:

Tucca. . . . my name's Hamlet revenge: thou hast been at Parris garden, hast not?

and Tucca is followed by his boy, "with two pictures under his cloak"—a skit on Hamlet's speech to his mother on the pictures of her first and second husbands. Again, in Westward Hoe (1607), occur the lines: "I, but when light wives make heavy husbands, let these husbands play mad Hamlet; and crie revenge". As late as 1618, Rowland, in The Night Raven, has: "I will not cry Hamlet Revenge my greeves, But I will call Hang-man Revenge on theeves".

On the generally received hypothesis of an Ur-Hamlet, it has been supposed that this phrase is a quotation from the old play revised by Shake-speare, but that it was excised during the revision. A trace of the original construction has been found in the dialogue of the Ghost and Hamlet, I. v. 23 ff.:

Ghost. If thou didst ever thy dear father love-

Hamlet. O God!

Ghost. Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

Hamlet. Murder!

Ghost. Murder most foul. . . .

Hamlet. Haste me to know 't, that I, with wings as swift

As meditation or the thoughts of love, May sweep to my revenge.

But since there is now no ground for believing in the existence of an Ur-Hamlet, the phrase "Hamlet, revenge" cannot have occurred there. Even in itself, however, the current interpretation offers several difficulties and is based on a rather narrow view that does not allow for human, rather popular, tendencies and fallibility. The Q1 version of this passage is practically identical with those of Q2 and F1, and none of the three shows any trace of such a phrase as "Hamlet, revenge". Yet the pirate had played the part of Marcellus, and was thus in a position to hear exactly what was said at the beginning of I. v., which contains the nearest approach to the phrase. He had, at the end of the previous scene, just gone off the stage in pursuit of Hamlet and the Ghost, and was waiting with Horatio in the wings to reappear in continuation of the pursuit at I. v. 112. He has given a full and fairly accurate report of these 112 lines, and if such a phrase as "Hamlet, revenge" had been uttered, could hardly have failed to report it, particularly since it had become so popular as a catchword.

The easiest approach to a satisfactory explanation is to consider a similar phrase current at the time, "Jeronimo, revenge". This phrase is presumably based on *The Spanish Tragedy* or perhaps on *The First Part of Ieronimo*. But it actually occurs in neither. Yet it is quoted by contemporaries as if it did. The Ghost in *The Spanish Tragedy*,

however, does cry "Vindicta mihi!" just as the Ghost in Hamlet cries "Revenge..." This type of phrase, then, seems to have been formed by coupling the exhortation to revenge with the name of the hero who is thus exhorted. In the last decade of the sixteenth century it had become a stock phrase, and few playwrights miss an opportunity of dragging it in.

Peele, for example, in The Battle of Alcazar II. 1., introduces three ghosts crying "Vindicta". In Locrine we have the ghost of Albanact crying "Revenge! revenge for blood!" and later "Vindicta, vindicta". So in A Warning for Faire Women, in Ben Jonson's Poetaster, and in numerous other plays of the time. Every Man in his Humour shows clearly the general character of the phrase, in Cob's "Revenge, vinegar revenge, vinegar and mustard revenge", a use similar to that of Rowland already quoted.

The truth seems to be that, as Professor Boas remarks, "A species rather than a single play is ridiculed here". The phrase "Hamlet, revenge" has thus no bearing on the date of any of the

versions of the play.

A similar latitude of interpretation must be allowed towards the other so-called quotation from Hamlet. Robert Armin, who had been an author and actor during the early part of Shake-speare's career as early as 1590, and obviously knew Hamlet, says, in his Nest of Ninnies (1608), "ther are, as Hamlet saies, things cald whips in

store". Yet he has made a mistake. "Things called whips" comes, not from *Hamlet*, but from 2 Henry VI, II. 1. He has been misled, just as the pirate of Q1 was misled, by a simple process of association. Hamlet says, in his famous soliloquy:

... who would bear the whips and scorns of time?

The word "whips" has been sufficient to cause the confusion.

That Hamlet is not included by Francis Meres in his list of twelve plays of Shakespeare in Palladis Tamia (1598) is no certain argument against an early date. Meres's list consists of six comedies and six tragedies or historiesobviously for balance—and there is no reason why these should be taken to include all Shakespeare's work before 1598. Henry VI, for example, does not appear in the list, although its three parts were written about (or before) 1590 and, to judge from the number of reminiscences in Hamlet QI, and from the piracies (The Contention and The True Tragedy), had been extremely popular. Hamlet, written about the same time, would also be an old and less known play in 1598, and its omission by Meres not unnatural.

It is otherwise quite certain that *Hamlet*, not the QI, but the folio version, was familiar before 1601. There are numerous references, in plays written before that date, to phrases, characters, and scenes in *Hamlet*.

The Elizabethan playwright who was most susceptible to "tags" was John Marston. His plays are full of them: indeed, his part in a composite play can be distinguished with some accuracy through this very characteristic. Marston's tags frequently come from Hamlet. Hamlet himself is actually introduced as a footman in Marston's Eastward Hoe, published in 1605. His Antonio and Mellida, which, from a reference in Act V, seems to have been written in 1599, contains a distinct allusion to Hamlet:

Rosaline. Can a ghost speake?

Balurdo. Scurvily, as I doe.

Ros. And walke?

Bal. After their fashion.

Antonio. . . . Look, look where he stalks, wrapt up in clouds of grief, . . . <sup>1</sup>

The term "scurvily" is strikingly reminiscent of Lodge's "ghost which cried so miserally at the Theator". In the second part of Antonio and Mellida, also published in 1602, but probably written in 1599 or 1600, the ghost of Balurdo cries from under the stage, like the ghost of Hamlet's father. This scene had specially impressed Marston, and is again referred to in The Malcontent (1600?):

Malevole. . . . Illo, ho ho ho, arte there olde true penny? 2

<sup>1</sup> H. Harvey Wood, Plays of John Marston, i. 27, 29.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 181.

Again, in the Bad Quarto of Romeo and Juliet (1597) there occurs a plain reminiscence of Hamlet. Where the Folio text has—

... a grave man ...

... a braggart, a rogue, a villain, ...

R.J. III. 1. 95, 98

the Bad Quarto has-

and then some peasantly rogue, some Sexton, some base slaue shall write my Epitapth, . . .

which has been suggested by Hamlet's

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!

and by the Grave-digger scene ("a grave man").

The Chronicle History of King Leir, the supposed original of Shakespeare's King Lear, was printed in 1605. There had previously been entered on the Stationers' Register, on May 14, 1594, The moste famous Chronicle historye of Leire, kinge of England, and his Three Daughters. But no publication corresponding to this entry has come to light. Sir Sidney Lee is probably correct when he says in his introduction to King Leir (The Shakespeare Classics, 1909, p. xv) "There is little question that the present play of King Leir, which was published in 1605, was identical with the work which was ... licensed for publication by Edward White in 1594." If it was not, then the work referred to could only have been Shakespeare's King Lear, which raises

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 11.

another set of problems, but which would equally establish the existence of *Hamlet* in 1594.

King Leir opens with an obvious imitation or reminiscence of Claudius' speech in Hamlet:

Leir. Thus to our grief the obsequies perform'd Of our too late deceas'd and dearest queen,

and passes to Ophelia and Polonius with

Or silly sheep without a pastor's care; Although ourselves do dearly tender them,

Occasional reminiscences are:

I am as kind as is the pelican, That kills itself, to save her young ones' lives.

II. 111. 43-44

(Cf. Hamlet, IV. v. 143.)

King Leir, V. vII., is a jumble of the opening scene and the Grave-digger scene in Hamlet. When the first watchman in Leir says:

I have been watchman about this beacon this thirty year,

when they pun on the word "as (ass)" and fall to argument in this manner:

... say here stands the pot of ale; that's the beacon, ... etc.

QI version, which does not contain the "pelican" simile, nor the pun, and where the Clown's speech has only: "looke you sir, I stand here"; but the Q2 or FI version where the simile is given (as

above) and where the Clown says: "here lyes the water, good, here stands the man. . . ." Hamlet, then, was familiar by 1594.

A further evidence of the early date of Hamlet may be found in the satire on Euphuism. Lyly's Euphues and his England was published in 1579 (or 1580 or 1581) and the imitation of its artificial style became fashionable about the years 1584-6, as Greene's pamphlets and novels of that date clearly show. By 1588-9 Euphuism was on the decline, partly as recognised for the absurdity it was, and partly through being replaced by the style of Sidney's Arcadia. Those plays of Shakespeare, then, that show its influence, or where it is ridiculed, are likely to belong to an early period, either shortly before or shortly after 1590. Elze points out that Shakespeare ridicules Euphuism, not only in the character of Polonius, but also in those of Osric, and of the Grave-digger, who is a Euphuist in his way. In the scene with the latter (V. 1.) Hamlet alludes to the "three years" since the "age has grown so picked", which points to the height of the fashionable jargon about 1585. The omission of a great part of Osric's Euphuistic utterances in F1 is thus quite natural: the fashion had passed and had ceased to be of topical interest or to have definite point.

The later limit for *Hamlet* is fixed by Nashe's reference, already quoted, from which it is clear

that *Hamlet* was a well-known play by August 1589. The date actually suggested by the play itself is the summer or autumn of 1588, when interest was centred in the Armada. Shakespeare, in some way not known to us, was interested in the sea and in naval enterprise; and acquainted, beyond the limits of a landsman, with naval terms. It is not unlikely, then, that the naval preparations of 1588 find a reflection in the lines:

... tell me, he that knows,
Why this same strict and most observant watch
So nightly toils the subject of the land,
And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,
And foreign mart for implements of war;
Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task
Does not divide the Sunday from the week.

Hamlet, I. 1. 70-76

The preparations for the Armada were in progress chiefly from the end of May 1588, and would be continued into June and July. (See Hakluyt, I. 595, ed. 1598). There is possibly a further reference to the "singeing of the King of Spain's beard", Drake's expedition in the previous year, in the lines:

King. Breake not your sleepes for that, you must not thinke

That we are made of stuffe so flat and dull, That we can let our beard be shooke with danger, And thinke it pastime. . . .

Hamlet, IV. vII. 30 ff.

Hamlet, then, may be dated between August 1588 and August 1589, and most probably, as will be seen from the topical references discussed later, in the early months of 1589.

<sup>1</sup> Chapter 8.

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## 7. THE PIRACY SHAKESPEARE'S FIRST COMPANY

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### 7. THE PIRACY SHAKESPEARE'S FIRST COMPANY

IF, then, Hamlet belongs to 1588 or 1589, for what company was it written, and how and when was it pirated? It has been plausibly argued by Mr. R. Crompton Rhodes and Dr. Greg that Pembroke's was Shakespeare's first company. This seems incontestable, so far as it goes. The argument as given by Greg (Henslowe, ii. 105) is as follows: "From the title-pages of plays published in 1594 and 1595 we learn that Edward II, the Taming of a Shrew, Titus Andronicus, and the True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York, that is, 3 Henry VI, had been in their [Pembroke's] repertory. . . . In June, 1594, the Chamberlain's men acted at Newington in four pieces, Titus Andronicus, the Taming of a Shrew, Hamlet, and Hester and Assuerus. All four were old plays, yet none belonged to the stock of Strange's men [the previous name of the Chamberlain's] in 1592. Two, as we have just seen, were Pembroke plays; the obvious inference is that the others came from the same source. . . . Since Titus Andronicus is said on the title-page to have been acted by Derby's men (as well as by Pembroke's and Sussex's) it must have passed, no

doubt in company with the rest, to its new owners between 25 September, 1593, and 16 April, 1594."

Three at least, then, of Shakespeare's plays,2 whether in an older form, or as we now have them, were in possession of Pembroke's and passed from them to Derby's or Strange's. It certainly does not seem likely, although it is possible, that these plays had previously been in the possession of any other company. Hamlet and Hester and Ahasuerus, however, are still unaccounted for, and it is not impossible that they came from another source, the Queen's men. For the Queen's, returning for a short London season after about two years in the country, also broke before the performance of Hamlet recorded by Henslowe in June, 1594. If, then, Hamlet was written in 1588 or 1589, it may either have been written for the Queen's and remained in their hands till they broke; or it may have passed from them to Pembroke's and thence to the Chamberlain's, but without appearing on the stage for about nine months (from August 1593); or Pembroke's may have had an earlier existence than 1592, and may have been the original owners.

In order to reach a decision on the part played by Pembroke's in the history of the Quartos of Hamlet and in the dramatic career of Shakespeare,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Lord Strange succeeded as 5th Earl of Derby on Sept. 25, 1593, and died on April 16, 1594.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The Taming of the Shrew, 3 Henry VI, Titus Andronicus.

certain theories and facts regarding this company must be considered. Sir E. K. Chambers (Eliz. Stage, ii. 128) points out that there is no definite evidence of the existence of Pembroke's before 1592. It is found at Leicester in the last three months of that year, and made its only appearances at Court on December 26, 1592, and January 6, 1593. Payment for these was made on March 11, 1593. During the summer of 1593 the company travelled, owing to the plague in London, but had little success. On September 28, 1593, Henslowe, in reply to Alleyn's inquiries concerning them, wrote: "as for my lorde a Penbrockes wen you desier to knowe wheare they be they ar all at home and hausse ben this v or sixe weackes for they cane not saue ther carges wth trauell as I heare & weare fayne to pane ther parell for ther carge". Along with their apparel they must have sold some at least of their plays, including Titus Andronicus, The Taming of the Shrew, the three parts of Henry VI, and perhaps Richard III (to the Chamberlain's-Strange's Men), and Marlowe's Edward the Second (S.R., July 6, 1593) to the printers.

In the winter of 1593, however, some of the company must have attempted a fresh venture in the provinces. No direct trace of them or of a Pembroke's company is again found until 1597: which may or may not have been a continuation of this provincial venture. Being apparently

without a stock of plays, they were forced to reconstruct a number from memory—some of the so-called piracies. Among these, as Professor Peter Alexander has shown, were The Contention of York and Lancaster (2 Henry VI), The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York (3 Henry VI), and The Taming of a Shrew (The Taming of the Shrew).

Now Hamlet QI shows a few reminiscences from Edward the Second and a number from the three—but especially the first two—parts of Henry VI. Since there is no reason to associate these plays with any company but Pembroke's, the "pirate" must have been at some time a Pembroke's man.

Since the text of *The Contention* was entered on the Stationers' Register on March 12, 1594, it may be assumed that the "pirate" (and his associates) returned from the provinces early in 1594. The text of *Hamlet Q1* would thus be assigned to a period between September 28, 1593, and March 12, 1594. The chances are, however, that it was prepared with the rest in the "five or six weeks" previous, in London.

This does not prove, however, that Hamlet was written for Pembroke's, or ever acted by them. It might have been, for Sir E. K. Chambers's earlier limit of 1592 for the existence of the company is probably rather late. Fleay's conjecture that it was a continuation of Worcester's on the death of their patron in 1589, is likely to be

nearer the truth. The Troublesome Raigne of King Iohn, printed in 1591, contains a number of clear reminiscences of 3 Henry VI. Henry VI is thus likely to date as far back as 1590. And Henry VI, as we learn from the title-page of The Contention, was acted by Pembroke's.

This, however, does not go far enough back, unless the company was indeed a continuation of Worcester's. Other considerations, however, make it impossible that *Hamlet* was written for Pembroke's, and point to one conclusion, namely, that Shakespeare's first company, the company for which, in 1588–1589, he wrote *Hamlet*, was the Queen's.

Professor A. W. Pollard has already argued in this sense.<sup>2</sup> His case rests chiefly on Greene's invective of 1592, referring to Shakespeare as an "upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers".<sup>3</sup> "Our", Professor Pollard points out, includes not only Greene, but also Peele, Marlowe, and possibly Nashe. Peele and probably Nashe, besides Greene himself, wrote mostly for the Queen's, and Greene's enmity would be best explained if Shakespeare had ousted him and incidentally his fellows, or some of them, from their positions as writers for their own company. Several so-called old Queen's plays, moreover,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See p. 138 ff.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Introduction to Alexander, Henry VI and Richard III, pp. 17 ff. <sup>8</sup> A Groatsworth of Wit.

such as The Famous Victories of Henry V, King Leir, and The Troublesome Raigne of King Iohn, were taken over by the Chamberlain's—at least their counterparts, written by Shakespeare, become Chamberlain's plays. Presumably they accompanied their author in his change of companies.

That Professor Pollard's suggestion is correct can be corroborated by the evidence of the "echoes" in Hamlet Q1, from which it is clear that neither Pembroke's nor Strange's was Shakespeare's first company, but that the Queen's fulfils all the conditions demanded. It is clear that the "pirate" had played the part of Lorenzo or Balthazar in The Spanish Tragedy. The company for which this play was originally written is at present unknown. The conjectural date assigned to it is about 1586. But its first definite appearance in stage history, in Henslowe's Diary, occurs in 1592, and shows that it was then in the hands of Strange's men, who acted it 16 times between March 14, 1592, and January 22, 1593. Strange's were at that time, and until 1594, acting along with the Admiral's men at the Rose. After 1594, The Spanish Tragedy is found in possession of the Admiral's. The pirate of Hamlet, a member of Pembroke's in 1593, and presumably also in 1592, is thus unlikely to have acted in The Spanish Tragedy after 1592. Nor is this play likely ever to have been the property of Pembroke's, even if they had an existence before 1592.

There is no sign that they sold any of their plays before 1593. Nor, again, is the pirate likely to have been a member of Strange's and so to have gained an earlier acquaintance with this play. He shows no acquaintance with the other plays in the regular Strange's repertory. Further, he was acquainted with, and had acted in, Hamlet, which was not a Strange's play until 1594 (or, so far as our argument has gone, 1593). If, then, Hamlet was a Queen's play, he must have been a Queen's man before joining Pembroke's, and The Spanish Tragedy must have been a Queen's play before passing to Strange's.

This agrees perfectly with the known history of the Queen's men. The Spanish Tragedy cannot have belonged before 1592 to Strange's, since it does not appear in their earliest lists, and since the pirate—never a member of Strange's—had acted a part in it. Nor can it have belonged to Pembroke's before 1592, since they may not even have existed, and since they are not known to have sold any of their plays before July, 1593. In addition, the Queen's are known to have been going rapidly downhill after 1588, and in December 1591 they left London to go into the country. It seems most probable that they then sold some of their older plays, such as Kyd's Spanish Tragedy, to Strange's men.

That this was the actual course of events, and further, that *Hamlet* was never a Pembroke's

play, but passed direct from the Queen's to the Chamberlain's in 1594, is proved by a glance at the parts acted by the pirate in the various plays with which he shows familiarity. In Hamlet itself he acted Marcellus, and one or two other subordinate parts; in The Spanish Tragedy, Lorenzo or Balthazar, still not a leading part. But in the plays that definitely belonged to Pembroke's, he took one of the leading parts, if not sometimes that of the hero—the King in Edward II, and Talbot in I Henry VI. His early career must have been with the Queen's, and, as they declined, he passed to Pembroke's. On the "breaking" of Pembroke's, he was either the leader or one of the leaders of a small company for touring the provinces, and had skill enough to reconstruct from memory a repertoire of the plays he knew.

If Pembroke's, too, possessed the "book" of Hamlet until May 1594, what need for a piracy? And if the Chamberlain's acquired it in September 1593, why does the first record of it in their lists appear only in June 1594? The available information concerning the fortunes of the Queen's shows that they were likely to sell plays in 1594, and shows indeed the exact occasion. On May 8, 1594 (May 18), Henslowe entered in his Diary (i. 4; ii. 80) a loan of £15 to his nephew Francis Henslowe, "to lay downe for his share to the Quenes players when they broke & went into the contrey to pleye". Nine of their plays found

their way to the press during that and the following year. The inference is that *Hamlet* was sold at the same time to Chamberlain's and was by them acted the following month.

The pirate would naturally select for reproduction such plays as had proved popular. His choice of *Hamlet*, and 2 and 3 Henry VI, shows that he knew his public. It suggests also-what has already been otherwise shown-that Hamlet, by 1593, was already a popular play, and that 1588-89 is not an unlikely date for its composition. By 1592 Shakespeare had been admitted by Chettle to be "excellent in the qualitie he professes", that is, as a dramatist (if not also as an actor), and to date back his career and popularity to plays written for the Queen's in 1588-9 is further justified. Greene's jealousy is also much more naturally explained on this supposition. And Nashe's gibe (August 1589) at the "Hamlets ... of tragical speeches" falls exactly and naturally into place.

Shakespeare's own course is thus quite clear. He began as a writer for the Queen's. By December, 1591, at the latest, he was writing for Pembroke's. In 1594 he joined the Chamberlain's. When exactly he left the Queen's for Pembroke's, and whether he was at the same date writing for both companies, there is not sufficient evidence to decide. But the evidence of Lear<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 11.

suggests that it was in 1591, and thus probably at the time when the Queen's left London.

However that may be, both Shakespeare and the pirate had belonged in turn to the Queen's and Pembroke's. This suggests that at some time between 1589 and the end of 1591—but probably at the latter date—there was a movement from the Queen's to Pembroke's. It also suggests that Pembroke's was not, as Sir E. K. Chambers (Eliz. Stage, ii. 129) thinks, an offshoot for touring purposes during the plague-years 1592 and 1593, but an independent company.

Further evidence confirming the date suggested for the *Hamlet* piracy may perhaps be offered at this point. From the similar stage-history of the plays themselves, from the common plays echoed and the common phrases used in the corresponding piracies, it may be conjectured that *Hamlet*, and 2 and 3 *Henry VI*, were pirated by the same actor.

An examination of the evidence now at our disposal confirms this conjecture. It has already been shown that the pirate of *Hamlet* played the part of the King in Marlowe's *Edward II*. The echoes from this play, then, in *The Contention* and *The True Tragedy* ought to be from the same "part". A brief examination is sufficient to prove that this is so. The following echoes are quoted in Prof. Alexander's *Shakespeare's Henry VI and Richard III*:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> A list of these is given in the Appendix.

(1) Messenger. Madame, I bring you newes from Ireland,
The wilde Onele my Lords, is vp in Armes,
With troupes of Irish Kernes that vncontrold,
Doth plant themselues within the English pale.

The Contention, p. 539

Lancaster (to the King). The wilde Oneyle, with swarmes of Irish Kernes,

Liues vncontroulde within the English pale.

Edward II, 966-967

(2) I see no reason, why a King of yeeres

(2) I see no reason, why a King of yeeres
Should be to be protected like a Child.

2 Henry VI, II. 111. 28-29

Baldock (to the King). As though your highnes were a schoole boy still,

And must be awde and gouernd like a child.

Edward II, 1336-1337

Spencer (to the King). Did you regard the honor of your name Edward II, 1323

And nere regards the honour of his name

And nere regards the honour of his name, But still must be protected like a childe, And gouerned by that ambitious Duke.

The Contention, p. 518

(3) But haue you no greater proofes then these?

The Contention, p. 543

Mort. iu. But hath your grace no other proofe then this?

Edward II, 2611

(4) And long thou shalt not staie, but ile haue thee repelde,

The Contention, p. 546

Edward. And long thou shalt not stay, or if thou doost,

Ile come to thee.

Edward II, 410-411

(5) But ere it be long, He go before them all, Despight of all that seeke to crosse me thus.

The Contention, p. 515

Edward. Nay all of them conspire to crosse me thus, But if I liue, ile tread vpon their heads.

Edward II, 897-898

In four of these five passages (Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5) in *Edward II*, the King is the only character always on the stage:

- 1. 5. Edward and the Nobles.
  - 2. Edward, Baldock, and Spencer.
  - 4. Edward and Gaueston.

Two (4, 5) consist of his own words: two (1, 2) are directly addressed to him. The third (3) is from the closing scene of the play after the murder of the King, not long after his body has been dragged off the stage. This scene is also echoed in *Hamlet Q1* (see p. 68).

It may therefore be argued that *Hamlet* and 2 *Henry VI* were pirated by the same actor for Pembroke's Men, on the occasion of their provincial venture of 1593 and 1594. The *Henry VI* piracies fell into the publisher's hands in 1594 and 1595, and the fact that the *Hamlet* piracy was held over until 1603 is an accident of which we have no explanation.

## 8. THE TOPICAL REFERENCES

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#### 8. THE TOPICAL REFERENCES

The topical allusions in *Hamlet* can be readily explained in conformity with the date 1588-9. Some, indeed, add considerable weight to it, while others, to explain which our present knowledge is inadequate, do not contradict it.

One of the best known of such allusions is contained in the line:

The croking Rauen doth bellow for reuenge.

III. 11. 264

It has been frequently pointed out that this line, spoken by Hamlet when he is impatient for the play within the play to continue, telescopes two lines from the old anonymous play (published in 1594, and generally ascribed to a date about 1586) The True Tragedie of Richard the Third:

The screeking Rauen sits croking for reuenge. Whole heads [herds] of beasts comes bellowing for reuenge.

The lines occur in a long passage in which almost every line ends with "reuenge", and which had evidently taken hold of the popular imagination. It belonged, moreover, to a Queen's play. In thus quoting, Shakespeare was at once showing Hamlet's impatience and using a popular tag from a play belonging to his own company. There would be no point in the quotation after 1594, when the Queen's sold their copy to the printers, and finally disappeared into the country. Even if the play had been taken up by another company—of which there is no evidence—it must have long passed the zenith of its popularity by 1600. But the point of Hamlet's quotation, or parody, would be obvious to an audience of 1589, when Richard the Third was in the regular repertory of the dominant Queen's.

A passage peculiar to Q1 is naturally linked with this. Hamlet, after his advice to the players that the fool should "speak no more than is set down for him", says, by way of illustration:

And then you have some agen, that keepes one sute Of ieasts, as a man is knowne by one sute of Apparell, and Gentlemen quotes his ieasts downe In their tables, before they come to the play, as thus:

Cannot you stay till I eate my porrige? and, you owe me

A quarters wages: and, my coate wants a cullison: And, your beere is sowre: and, blabbering with his lips,

And thus keeping in his cinkapase of leasts,

When, God knows, the warme Clowne cannot make a iest

Vnlesse by chance, as the blinde man catcheth a hare.

1X. 33-42

This passage has commonly been taken to refer to Will Kemp. It is explained that Kemp was absent from the Company (the Chamberlain's) from 1599 until 1602, when Hamlet is supposed to have been written or revised by Shakespeare; and that, on Kemp's return, the passage, out of deference to him, was deleted. It is much more probable, indeed it is almost certain, that the reference is not to Kemp, but to Tarlton, the clown of the Queen's Men. Dr. J. Dover Wilson has pointed out that two of the jests quoted belonged or are attributed to Tarlton and are found in his Jests, published in 1611. These are "my coate wants a cullison" and "your beere is sowre". Tarlton died in September 1588. There are thus two possibilities: either they belonged to the original text of Hamlet, if it was written before September 1588, and were deleted on Tarlton's death, although the general advice to the clown "not to speak more than is set down" for him was allowed to stand; or, more probably, they form a passage inserted through natural association by the pirate, himself originally a Queen's man, of advice regarding extempore jest with the actual extempore jests of Tarlton, the clown of the Queen's. In either case, an early date is confirmed both for Hamlet and for the piracy.

From the Folio text we learn that the company were on tour, chiefly because they had been "inhibited" by "the late Innouation" and that, in any case, they were not so followed", not in "the same estimation" in the City, owing to the popu-

larity of certain child-actors. There had been, also much "throwing about of Braines" and controversy between the players and poets of the rival companies. The Folio passage, although well known, is worth quoting in full:

Rosincrance. . . . the Tragedians of the City.

Hamlet. How chances it they trauaile? their residence both in reputation and profit was better both wayes.

Rosin. I thinke their Inhibition comes by the meanes of the late Innovation?

Ham. Doe they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the City? Are they so follow'd?

Rosin. No indeed, they are not.

Ham. How comes it? doe they grow rusty?

Rosin. Nay, their indeauour keepes in the wonted pace; But there is Sir an ayrie of Children, little Yases, that crye out on the top of question; and are most tyrannically clap't for't: these are now the fashion, and so be-ratled the common Stages (so they call them) that many wearing Rapiers, are affraide of Goose-quils, and dare scarce come thither.

Ham. What are they Children? Who maintains 'em? How are they escoted? Will they pursue the Quality no longer then they can sing? Will they not say afterwards if they should grow themselues to common Players (as it is like most if their meanes are no better) their Writers do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their owne Succession.

[Rosin. Faith there ha's bene much to do on both sides: and the Nation holds it no sinne, to tarre them to Controuersie. There was for a while, no mony bid for argument, vnlesse the Poet and the Player went to Cuffes in the Question.

Ham. Is't possible?

Guild. Oh there ha's beene much throwing about of Braines.

Ham. Do the Boyes carry it away?

Rosin. I that they do my Lord, Hercules & his load too.]

Ham. It is not strange: for mine Vnckle is King of Denmarke, and those that would make mowes at him while my Father liued; giue twenty, forty, an hundred Ducates a peece, for his picture in Little?

p. 262, col. 2—p. 263, col. 1.

This passage deals with a number of the company's grievances. The part within brackets may be first separated. It is clearly an insertion, since the last speech of Hamlet follows naturally from "exclaim against their owne Succession", but not from the "throwing about of Braines", or the Boys' triumph.

The passage as a whole has generally been taken to allude to the famous "War of the Theatres" about 1602. It may do so. But it is also open to be interpreted as referring to a similar war in 1588-9. The chief poet on the side of the children and also known as a controversialist in those years was John Lyly, then writing for the Children of Paul's. He was employed in 1589 to answer the Marprelate tracts in their own style, on the stage, as were also certain dramatists of the Queen's. He also engaged in a controversy with Gabriel Harvey, who dreaded that Lyly might make their quarrel the matter of a

comedy. Lyly seems also to have championed the children in a controversy with the Queen's.

There seems to have been considerable rivalry between the Queen's and the Boys' Companies, and much "throwing about of Braines". The Paul's Boys were then enjoying considerable popularity, especially at Court. Whatever the exact nature of the "war", it was undoubtedly being most fiercely waged in 1588-9. The Court lists 2 for 1584-5 and 1585-6 show only one (and that doubtful) recorded appearance of the Paul's Boys. In 1586-7, the Queen's appeared in four of the usual six Court performances, Leicester's and the Children of Paul's in one each. In 1587-8 the Queen's appeared thrice, Paul's twice. By 1588-9 the Queen's had lost their precedence—with two appearances to the Children's three. The same proportion was observed in the following year. In 1590 the Children's company was suppressed, and the Queen's, after a short revival of Court popularity, lost their premier position and were rapidly displaced by the Admiral's and Strange's Companies. The year 1589, in which they suffered most from the competition of the Boys, is thus the natural date for the reference.

The reference to the travels of the actors also applies exactly to the Queen's men in 1588-9,

<sup>1</sup> G. Harvey, Pierce's Supererogation (1589, pub. 1593).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Chambers, Eliz. Stage, iv. 100-106.

but is difficult to account for if taken to refer to the Chamberlain's about 1601. From 1594 to 1604, during the period when Hamlet is supposed to have been written or revised, the Chamberlain's are found in London; nothing has been discovered to indicate that they were ever on tour in the provinces. They were sufficiently prosperous, and were one of the two favoured companies allowed to continue performances by the order of 1598. But the Queen's were on tour in 1588 from July till December, much later into the winter than was customary with them. Again in 1589, their travels began very early and lasted throughout the year. During those two years, with the exception of the usual Court performances, the Queen's were certainly travelling, and not of their own accord—"their endeavour kept in the wonted pace"—or for the customary period. There had apparently, as the play says, been some "inhibition".

Signs are not wanting that the inhibition was due to the activities of the Puritans. They had kept up a continuous effort to suppress the actors, or at the least to drive them out of the City and its neighbourhood. They had already been successful, in 1584, in obtaining an inhibition against the Queen's and Arundel's. A later request of theirs is typical of the attitude of the Puritan city magistrates. Writing to Archbishop Whitgift on February 15, 1592, they suggested that the

needs of the Court for plays might be sufficiently provided for "by the privat exercise of her Mats own players in conuenient place". They had addressed a similar petition to the Privy Council in 1587. In 1588 and 1589, their petitions seem to have been more successful than usual.

On this occasion—at least in 1589—they had grounds of complaint that would appeal to Elizabeth and her Privy Council. The Queen's had taken part, at the instigation of the Bishops, in the Marprelate controversy, had discussed and criticised affairs of religion and ecclesiastical policy that the Queen considered as her special prerogative. About April 1589 A Whip for an Ape advises Martin's ecclesiastical opponents to "let old Lanam lash him with his rimes". Laneham was a leading actor of the Queen's men. The May-game of Martinism, probably played by the Queen's at the Theatre, was another anti-Martinist, that is, anti-Puritan, attack. In August, Martin's Month's Minde records the anger of the Puritans against the players "whom, saving their liveries (for indeed they are hir Majesty's men ...) they call rogues". In October a share in the Martin Marprelate controversy is suggested by Nashe as the reason for the Puritan success and the travels of the Queen's. In a pamphlet called The Returne of Caualiero Pasquill of England he says of the Queen's, whom he calls Vetus Comoedia, "She

<sup>1</sup> Eliz. Stage, ii. 110.

hath been so long in the Country, that she is somewhat altred: this is she that called in a counsell of Phisitians about Martin, and found by the sharpnes of his humour, when they had opened the vaine that feedes his head, that hee would spit out his lunges within one yeere. . . Pasquil. I haue to tell her in her eare, of the slye practise that was vsed in restraining of her". The "slye practise" must have come from the mayor and corporation of London, and must have been successful in obtaining from the Privy Council an inhibition, restraining the company from playing in or near the City. What exactly the "practise" was we do not know. It certainly covered 1589 and perhaps the last months of 1588.

The "late Innouation" must have some connection with the "inhibition", of which it is described as the cause. It refers, that is, to the Puritans, and to something new in their methods of "practise", or in the result they achieved by it. The usual explanation is that "in 1601 the Company [the Chamberlain's] was in disgrace at court owing to the share they had taken in the conspiracy of Essex and Southampton. A performance of Richard II had been given by them to encourage the conspirators. For the only time during a long period of years they were not invited to take part in the Christmas festivities. Probably they travelled during the autumn. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Eliz. Stage, iv. 231-232.

Then the 'inhibition' will be the refusal of permission to act at court, and the 'innovation', the political innovation or conspiracy which led to it".1

This, however, seems a very unsatisfactory explanation of "innovation". Essex's conspiracy was an attempt at innovation, not itself an innovation in any accepted sense of the term. The use of the word in *Hamlet* suggests some change that has actually been accomplished, not a mere attempt at change. Dr. F. S. Boas makes a suggestion similar to that of Sir E. K. Chambers, though his conclusions are rather different. "Innovation", he thinks, should be taken in the sense of "insurrection, tumult, commotion", and instances its use in *I Henry IV*, V. 1. 72-82, and in *Othello*, II. 111. 35-38.<sup>2</sup> These references are worth examining.

Worcester, in I Henry IV, explains the grounds of his rebellion. The King replies:

These things indeed you have articulate, Proclaim'd at market-crosses, read in churches, To face the garment of rebellion
With some fine colour that may please the eye Of fickle changelings and poor discontents, Which gape and rub the elbow at the news Of hurlyburly innovation:
And never yet did insurrection want Such water-colours to impaint his cause; Nor moody beggars, starving for a time Of pell-mell havoc and confusion.

<sup>1</sup> Chambers, Warwick edition, p. 224.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Shakespeare and the Universities, p. 23.

"Innovation" here seems to mean simply the introduction of a new system or régime: something to "please the eye of fickle changelings", and, by the destruction of the old system, to draw the support of all "poor discontents". In this context the innovation will naturally be accompanied with, or rather will accompany, "insurrection, tumult, commotion". But it seems clear enough that the two things are not synonymous. So in the second instance, from Othello:

Cassio. I have drunk but one cup to-night, and that was craftily qualified too, and behold what innovation it makes here [in his brain]: I am unfortunate in the infirmity, and dare not task my weakness with any more.

Again the sense of "change", "a new state of affairs", will suit the meaning sufficiently.

That the word applies to the attempts of the Puritans to sweep the City clean of old abuses is confirmed by a similar use of "innovation" by Chapman, in a passage where it can hardly mean "tumult" or "insurrection", and where, also, it is directly associated with the theatre:

The stage and actors are not so contemptful As every innovating Puritan, And ignorant sweater-out of zealous envy, Would have the world imagine.

The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois, I. 1. 348-351

Other examples tend to confirm the idea that the word was used then much as it is now, e.g. "Englishmen are al for innouatio, they are cleane

spoiled if once in 20. yeares they have not a new fashion of religion" (Nashe, *Christs Teares over Ierusalem*, McKerrow, ii. 134).

The exact nature of the innovation we do not know. It is not improbably connected with the "slye practise" mentioned by Nashe, and seems to refer to the objective, partly successful in 1588-9, of the Puritans with regard to the theatres.

There seems no sufficient reason to doubt, therefore, that this passage in *Hamlet* refers directly to the activities of the Puritans and the actors in 1589. It covers all the elements of the situation—the throwing-about of brains, the competition of the children's companies, the innovation, the inhibition, and the travels of the Queen's Men.

Further confirmation of the early date of Hamlet is provided by the notice, on the title-page of QI, that the play had been acted "in the two Vniuersities of Cambridge and Oxford". No visits of the Chamberlain's Men to either university have been recorded between 1593 and 1603. This was almost a foregone conclusion. The universities, in 1593, successfully appealed to the Privy Council to prevent acting companies from visiting them, and an Act of the Privy Council was issued to that effect. It ran: "... understanding that commonplaiers do ordinarily resorte to the Universytie of Cambridge there to recite interludes and plaies, some of them being full of lewde

example and moste of vanity, besides the gatheringe togeather of multitudes of people, whereby is great occasion also of divers other inconvenyences, we have thought good to require you, the Vicechancelour, with the assystance of the Heads of the Colledges, to take speciall order that hereafter there maie no plaies or interludes of common plaiers be used or sett forthe either in the University or in any place within the compasse of five miles. . . . Although it was impossible for the Vice-Chancellor to prevent players from acting in the town, yet it seems clear that the University, which had of itself applied for the Privy Council inhibition, was most unlikely to allow travelling companies to act within its walls, but preferred to pay the players to go away without acting. It was, in 1593, merely renewing an edict of 1575 and a prohibition of Convocation in 1584.2 Dr. Boas therefore suggests with confidence that the acting of Hamlet could have taken place only in the towns of Oxford and Cambridge. This agrees well with the history of the Queen's Men. They are found at Oxford each year from 1589 till 1593, and at Cambridge at least once during that time—in 1592.3

To the common hypothesis that the visits must have been made by the Chamberlain's Men about

<sup>1</sup> A.P.C., 1593, p. 428.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Boas, Shakespeare and the Universities, pp. 15-16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Chambers, Shakespeare, i. 34-35, and Boas, op. cit., pp. 19-20.

1600 or 1601, the Oxford and Cambridge records give no support. It has indeed been suggested that this company may be one of the three unnamed companies in a collective entry in the Oxford accounts for 1600-1601. This, however, is very improbable, since the Chamberlain's do not appear in any other provincial entries about that time, and indeed are most unlikely to have travelled. If that company, or its predecessor, Strange's, is sought in the University towns, it is found before 1594, but not after (i.e. until 1603). Which, even if Hamlet had then been in their possession, is equal confirmation of an early date for the First Quarto.

From the negative side, the impossibility of a piracy later than 1593, and a Shakespearian Hamlet later than 1589, may be tested very simply. Suppose the piracy to have taken place after April or May 1594, by which time Hamlet was in the hands of the Chamberlain's Men, and before 1602, when Q1 was entered on the Stationers' Register. Now we know that the pirate was playing important parts by the time he produced Q1; and we have lists of the members of the Chamberlain's Men for these years and can trace all changes in personnel. Was there, among those who left the company in the interval, any who was probably, or possibly, the "pirate"?

In the interval between 1593 and 1602 only two

<sup>1</sup> Boas, Shakespeare and the Universities, p. 20.

men are known to have left the Chamberlain's, namely George Bryan and Will Kemp. The pirated parts do not suit Kemp, the clown. Bryan is last mentioned in 1596, and had certainly gone by 1598, since he is not in the Every Man in his Humour actor-list of that year. How then could he, on the accepted chronology, incorporate in a piracy any borrowings from Henry V and Twelfth Night, the accepted dates for which are 1599 and 1600–1601 respectively? And how did he come to be acquainted with the Spanish Tragedy, which had been in the hands of the Admiral's since 1594, and with a "part" in Edward II, sold by Pembroke's to the printers in 1593?

In short, it seems impossible to account for the topical allusions or the "parts" in *Hamlet Q1* unless by referring the play and the piracy to a date not later than 1593.

<sup>1</sup> Chambers, Eliz. Stage, iii. 359.

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# 9. THE GERMAN "HAMLET"

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#### 9. THE GERMAN "HAMLET"

A GERMAN version of Hamlet, entitled Der bestrafte Brudermord has come down only in a text of 1710.¹ It is a short sketch containing in outline the story of Hamlet. There is no proof that this version was written and performed in Shake-speare's time, but everything seems to make such an inference almost certain. A play called Tragoedia von Hamlet einen printzen in Dennemark was played by English actors at Dresden in 1626,² and perhaps at Danzig in 1616; and we know that English players visited Germany as early as 1586.

It is fairly certain that Der bestrafte Brudermord and the other plays printed by Cohn are piracies similar in nature to the First Quarto of Hamlet. They are not, indeed, so close to the original. They might rather be called free adaptations of Shakespeare for the German stage. They include matter altogether foreign to the English play and obviously of German origin. But even amid such material can be seen the same process of inexact and confused recollection as in the Bad Quartos. The events of the play are often given in the wrong order. Hamlet takes over much of the Ghost's

<sup>1</sup> Printed in Cohn, Shakespeare in Germany, 236 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Chambers, Eliz. Stage, ii. 286; Shakespeare, i. 422.

part, explaining to Horatio what the Ghost should explain to Hamlet. The Dumb-show is introduced, but is not followed by the play within the play. Incidents are added from other sources, the chief being the story of a woman convicted of guilt by seeing a play bearing on her crime (suggested by Hamlet's "I have seen guilty creatures . . . '') and a struggle in which the bandits (= pirates) who capture Hamlet are made by a ruse to kill each other. The names are in some cases entirely altered, in others they are put into German garb. Leartes becomes Leonhardus, Erico is the King's brother, the Queen is called Sigrie, while the court-fool has the name of Phantasmo. The most interesting feature is the appearance of the name Corambus—the form used in the First Quarto for Polonius.

Although the first recorded performance of Der bestrafte Brudermord occurred in 1626, it is evident that the date of composition is much earlier. The use of the name Corambus shows that it cannot be later than 1603-4, since by that time, at the latest, the name had been altered to Polonius. It cannot be argued to the contrary that the German version was based on the First Quarto, either as acted or printed. The order of the scenes is wrong, but not the same wrong order as in the Quarto. The German play contains, besides, although in a mutilated form, the passage at I. II. I-27, which is entirely omitted in QI, and

shows acquaintance with other similar omitted passages. It must therefore have been derived from the *Hamlet* of Q2 or, more probably, from the cut version, F1, at some date earlier than 1604.

Certain reminiscences of other plays in *Der bestrafte Brudermord* suggest a date about 1590. The following has been taken as an allusion to Essex's expedition (1589) to Portugal, in which he lost nearly half his men:

Hamlet. Ay, ay, King, send me off to Portugal, that I may never come back again, that is the best plan. King. No, not to Portugal, but to England, and those two shall accompany you on the journey.

It is possible, however, to find here, without altering the date suggested, a reminiscence of a play that is otherwise connected with *Hamlet*.

In The First Part of Ieronimo, Don Horatio is informed "He meanes to send you to heaven, when you returne from Portugale". Service in Portugal was so severe and dangerous that there was little chance of his return, and it was for that reason that he was being sent. This is a scene that the pirate would naturally associate with the sending of Hamlet to England, on a similar errand. Ieronimo, like The Spanish Tragedy with which it is associated, is generally dated about 1585-6, and, while it continued to be acted even after 1600, reminiscences from it point rather to an early date,

when it was at the height of its popularity, than to a later.

The passage imitated, or derived, from Heywood's A Warning for Faire Women (first published in 1599, but written about 1590) points to a similar conclusion. Hamlet says (II. 11. 617):

. . . I have heard
That guilty creatures sitting at a play,
Haue by the very cunning of the scene,
Beene strooke so to the soule, that presently
They have proclaim'd their malefactions.

Der bestrafte Brudermord illustrates the general statement by a particular instance from Heywood, just as is done in the First Quarto with the jests from Tarlton. Heywood describes the incident thus:

A woman, that had made away her husband. And sitting to behold a tragedy, At Linne, a towne in Norfolke, Acted by players travelling that way,—Wherein a woman that had murthered hers, Was ever haunted by her husband's ghost,

She was so mooved with the sight thereof, As she cried out the play was made by her, And openly confest her husband's murder.

This incident, transferred to a German setting, appears thus in the German version:

Hamlet. . . . play actors with their feigned fables oft hit the truth. Give ear, I'll tell thee a pretty tale. In

Germany, at Strasburg, there was once a pretty case. A wife murdered her husband by piercing him to the heart with an awl. Afterwards she buried the man under the threshold, she and her paramour. This deed remained hid full nine years, till at last it chanced that some actors came that way, and played a tragedy of like import; the woman who was likewise present at the play with her husband, began to cry aloud (her conscience being touched) alas! alas! you hit at me for in such manner did I murder my innocent husband. She tore her hair, ran straight way to the judge, freely confessed the murder which being proved true, in deep repentance for her sins she received the holy unction from the priest, gave her body to the executioner, and recommended her soul to God.<sup>1</sup>

The introduction, or Prologue, which does not of course occur in the English Hamlet, confirms this conclusion. It represents Hecate, or Night, and the three Furies, Alecto, Thisiphone, and Maegera. On the Elizabethan stage these belong to the early Senecan dramas like Gorboduc, The Misfortunes of Arthur, Tancred and Gismunda, and The Triumphs of Love and Fortune, where they appear in dumb-shows or introductions. Alecto also appears as a goddess of Revenge in the introduction to The Spanish Tragedy. By 1590, however, the fashion was waning rapidly, and such choruses or dumb-shows are rarely, if ever, found after 1595.

The German Prologue lends itself to conjecture.

<sup>1</sup> Cohn, Shakespeare in Germany, 268.

It is obviously of English origin. Just as obviously, it is not an attempt to reproduce—even allowing for association and confusion in the memory—the existing prologue of any English revenge tragedy. Nor is it likely, judging from the quality of the attempts at reproduction in the German piracies, to have been the original composition of the English actors. Is it fanciful to suggest that we have here, in approximate form, the original Prologue to *Hamlet* itself? It seems the most natural hypothesis, and has much to support it.

"It is notorious", says Cohn,¹ "that the older English pieces often had prologues in the form of dialogue, and that the introductory words were not always spoken by one person alone, as in the old German Theatre. These prologues have often been lost because it was not considered worth while to have them printed; but often also, especially at a later period of the English stage, no prologue was written, because the practice was considered pedantic, and even Shakespeare had already spoken against it in his Romeo and Juliet."

Now if we look for the circumstances under which such a version could be produced before 1604, and probably about 1590, the early date is justified and confirmed. On February 10, 1591, four actors, Richard Jones, Robert Browne, Thomas Saxfield, and John Bradstreet, obtained from the Lord High Admiral a passport to

<sup>1</sup> Cohn, Shakespeare in Germany, cxx.

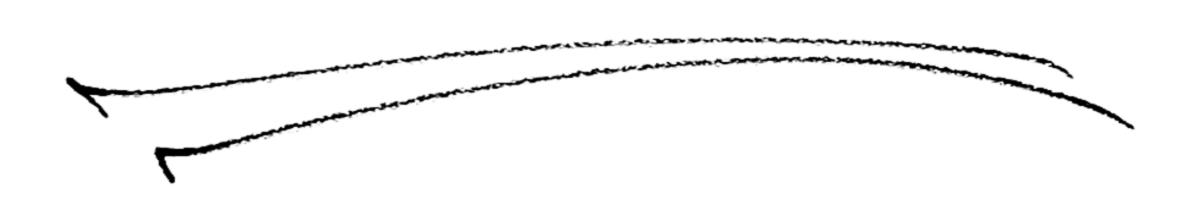
Germany and other European countries. Jones and Browne belonged to Worcester's Men in 1586, and later Jones to the Admiral's (1594-6), Pembroke's (1597), and the Admiral's (1597-1600), while Browne is found with Derby's (1599-1600).2 Of Saxfield (Sackville) and Bradstreet nothing further is known as to their career in England. The likeliest period for the production of the German version is thus 1591, when the four actors were still together, when their memories of older plays were still fresh, and when certain of the names in Hamlet (e.g. Corambis) had not been altered. These alterations probably took place in 1594, when Hamlet came into the hands of the Chamberlain's. The repertoire of the English actors in Germany would have to be prepared as soon as possible, to give them some plays at least to proceed with. Thus Hamlet is likely to have been reproduced early in 1591, on the actors' arrival. There is, moreover, no sign that any of the actors had ever belonged either to the Queen's or to the early Pembroke's company, which agrees with the very general character of Der bestrafte Brudermord,—the character it would have if reproduced by a spectator, not by an actor who had taken part in the original play.

<sup>1</sup> Chambers, Eliz. Stage, ii. 274.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 304, 324.

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# 10. FURTHER CONCLUSIONS

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### 10. FURTHER CONCLUSIONS

IT is, finally, necessary to show that those plays, of which echoes are found in Q1, must have been written before August 1593, when, approximately, that quarto was compiled. This presents no difficulty in the case of The Spanish Tragedy, Edward II, or Henry VI, which are, by general consent, assigned to dates before 1593. There remain to be dealt with the following plays, usually ascribed to later dates, which are here given in brackets: The Merry Wives of Windsor (1601), 2 Henry IV (1598), Henry V (1599), King John (1597), Twelfth Night (1600), Othello (1605), Pericles (1609), and An Humorous Day's Mirth (1597). Either these plays must have been written before 1593, or the argument relating to the date of Q1 collapses. Even if it is not always possible to prove positively the necessity of an earlier date, yet it must at least be possible to show that the available evidence does not conflict with such a conclusion.

For the dates of An Humorous Day's Mirth and Othello there is no definite evidence except with relation to other plays, and the position of the other plays is just the point to be settled.

<sup>1</sup> From Chambers, Shakespeare, i. 270-271, and Eliz. Stage, iii. 251.

Pericles

There is no internal evidence for the date of *Pericles*, as a whole, nor for the "Shakespearian" part of it (Acts III-V), from which the echoes in *Hamlet QI* are derived. The only external references agree with a date before 1593. One is Ben Jonson's allusion (c. 1629):

No doubt some mouldy tale, Like *Pericles*: . . . May keepe vp the *Play-club*: 1

It is linked with the old play of Edward the Fourth (Shore) in the Pimlyco of 1609,2 and Dryden says:

Shakespear's own Muse her Pericles first bore, The Prince of Tyre was elder than the Moore<sup>3</sup>

## Twelfth Night

The ascription of Twelfth Night to 1599–1600 rests chiefly on the reference to "the new map, with the augmentation of the Indies" (III. 11. 74). This was supposed by Steevens to refer to the map in Linschoten's Voyages, 1598. Verity thinks the reference is to the map made by Edward Wright, the Cambridge mathematician, in 1600. It was "our first scientific map" and created a great stir because of its 'lines', i.e. "rhumb-lines". The "treatment of India and the East is fuller and

<sup>1</sup> Chambers, Shakespeare, ii. 210. 2 Ibid. p. 217. 3 Ibid. p. 251.

more accurate than in any previous map: hence 'augmentation'".1

The real reference, however, seems to be to the Molineux map or globe of 1592. The forthcoming publication of this map was announced in the preface to the first edition of Hakluyt's Voyages in 1589, and in that volume the map was included in its earliest state. The "coming out of the very large and most exact terrestriall globe" was accomplished in 1592. It now stands in the library of the Middle Temple. The following description from Blundeville's Exercises (1594), emphasises the "newness" of the map: "The mappe which covereth Mr Molineux his terrestriall globe differeth greatly from Mercator his terrestriall globe, by reason that there are found out divers new places, as well towards the North Pole as in the East and West Indies, which were unknowne to Mercator". The map, it is unnecessary to add, is covered with rhumblines. It is perhaps not a mere coincidence that Twelfth Night is first mentioned in Manningham's Diary as performed in the Middle Temple.

Other internal allusions, supposed to fix the date of Twelfth Night about 1600, may quite as easily be explained as referring to 1592 or 1593. In particular, the phrase "Words are very rascals since bonds disgraced them" has been interpreted as referring to an inhibition by the Privy Council against the players in 1600 or 1601.

<sup>1</sup> Pitt Press edition, p. 114.

But is it not obvious that some equivocation in the terminology or interpretation of legal bonds is intended? It suggests rather the situation in the sub-plot of Greene's Looking Glasse for London and England (acted March 8, 1592), where a usurer takes advantage of his debtor's failure to comply with the literal conditions of the bond. Such a case seems to be alluded to in Twelfth Night. May not Greene and Shakespeare be alluding to the same case? Such an event would confirm the evidence of the map, and fix the date of Twelfth Night around 1592. In any case, no satisfactory explanation has been given of the phrase as referring to events in or around 1600.

Twelfth Night, then, written after the appearance of Molineux' globe and before August 1593, could have been written for one occasion only, for Twelfth Night, January 6, 1593. As has been argued above, Shakespeare at this time was writing for Pembroke's Men. Is it a mere coincidence that, on turning to the Court records, it is discovered that Pembroke's, on the only occasion when they appeared at Court, did so on December 26, 1592, and January 6, 1593? It is reasonable to suggest that Twelfth Night was written for this occasion.

### The Merry Wives of Windsor

The localisation of the scene at Windsor and the allusions to the Garter festival make it certain

¹ Chambers, Eliz. Stage, iv. 107.

that The Merry Wives was specially written for such an occasion; and the tradition is probably well founded that says, "The Fairys in the fifth Act makes a handsome Complement to the Queen, in her Palace of Windsor, who had oblig'd him to write a Play of Sir John Falstaff in Love, and which I am very well assured he perform'd in a Fortnight; a prodigious Thing, when all is so well contriv'd, and carry'd on without the least Confusion".1 The election ceremony of the Order took place on April 23—St. George's Day at Westminster, while the festival and investiture followed some time later, at Windsor. As Professor Hotson points out,2 Puck's warning to prepare Windsor,3 and the Fairy-Queen's to prepare the Chapel of St. George in Windsor Castle,4 are indications that the play was performed on or about the earlier date—that of the election in London.

Various years, ranging from 1598 to 1601, have been suggested for this Garter festival and The Merry Wives. Recently, Professor Hotson has made a case for the year 1597. Arguing that Shakespeare introduced unmistakable hits at Justice Gardiner into The Merry Wives, and that, naturally, this must have been done before Gardiner's death on November 26, 1597, he

<sup>1</sup> Chambers, Shakespeare, ii. 262.

<sup>2</sup> Shakespeare versus Shallow, p. 119 ff.

<sup>3</sup> V. V. 41-44. 4 Ibid. 55-71.

fixes a later limit for the date. The other limit he finds in Shakespeare's quarrel with Gardiner in October and November 1596. The Garter festival for which the play was written must thus, he considers, have been that of April 23, 1597. This date, he adds, is corroborated by two facts—that Lord Hunsdon, the patron of Shakespeare's company, was one of the newly elected Knights of the Garter, and that the Duke of Württemberg, formerly Count of Mömpelgart, was installed in absentia. The Duke had visited England from August 9 to September 5, 1592, been received by Queen Elizabeth, and expressed a great desire to be invested with the Order. At Oxford, during that visit, "he was delayed because his posthorses were worn out, and could not be replaced, even at double the normal cost",1 and there is a suggestion that he misused a warrant for taking up post-horses. It is to these incidents that Evans is supposed to refer in warning the Host to beware of "three cozen-germans that has cozened all the hosts of Readins, of Maidenhead, of Colebrook, of horses and money";2 and Doctor Caius in the lines, "it is tell-a me dat you make grand preparation for a duke de Jamany: by my trot, dere is no duke dat the court is know to come".3

Professor T. W. Baldwin has shown,4 however, that 1597 is an unsatisfactory date, and that the

<sup>1</sup> Chambers, Shakespeare, i. 427. 2 IV. v. 70-72.

<sup>3</sup> IV. v. 79-81. 4 T.L.S., October 8, 1931.

facts can be better explained if referred to 1592-3. He points out that the recognised alterations of the names "Oldcastle" to "Falstaff" and "Brook" to "Broome" must have been made at the demand of William Brooke, Lord Cobham, who was descended from Sir John Oldcastle, and that the same influence must be taken to explain the apology offered in the epilogue to 2 Henry IV: "for Oldcastle died a martyr, and this is not the man". Now Lord Cobham was appointed Lord Chamberlain on the death of the first Lord Hunsdon on July 22, 1596, and was then, as having direct jurisdiction over the players, in a position to enforce his demands. It seems probable that he did so almost at once. In any case, the alterations must have been made before his death on March 5, 1597. The play, therefore, must have been written (as must also I and 2 Henry IV) before that date, and Professor Hotson's suggestion—April 23, 1597—is too late to be considered.

The reference to the German Duke, it may be added, is more likely to have been made in 1593 than in 1597. It seems rather improbable that Shakespeare, in a play written expressly for the Garter festival, should go out of his way to ridicule a man whom the Queen had just elected, even although he were a subject for humour, and had been elected unwillingly and invested in absence. It is more probable that the jest should have been made soon after the visit of the Duke in 1592,

while the memory of his peculiarities was still fresh in mind, and before he was elected.

#### Three "Loose" Piracies

For the dates of 2 Henry IV, Henry V, and King John, there is the special evidence of two plays which I shall call "loose" piracies, namely, The Famous Victories of Henry the fifth and The Troublesome Raigne of King Iohn. With these, for reasons both of convenience and necessity, is to be considered a third, The True Chronicle History of King Leir-a "loose" piracy of Shakespeare's Lear. An examination of these three plays suggests that they have certain features in common—that they are piracies of Shakespearian plays, though of a looser kind than those commonly called Bad Quartos. Professor Peter Alexander has dealt convincingly with a similar piracy, The Taming of A Shrew.1 It will be sufficient here, without proving the case in detail for these piracies, to present only sufficient evidence to show that such a conclusion is for them also inevitable. They are generally regarded as old plays on which Shakespeare drew; but if it can be established that they are piracies of Shakespeare, then 2 Henry IV and Henry V are anterior to The Famous Victories (S.R. 1594), King John to The Troublesome Raigne (1591), and Lear to Leir (S.R. 1594).

<sup>1</sup> T.L.S., September 16, 1926.

King John

There is no certain evidence for the date of King John, except that it is mentioned in Meres's list of 1598. But that it is earlier than 1591 can be inferred from a comparison with The Troublesome Raigne of King Iohn, printed in that year.

The Troublesome Raigne contains a number of lines so exactly similar to lines in King John, and not derived in that form from any known source, that one of the two plays must have been indebted for them to the other. Such lines are so numerous and the similarity so close that the point need not be laboured. For example:

Hubert. My lord, they say, five moons were seen tonight;

Four fixèd; and the fifth did whirl about The other four in wondrous motion.

King John, IV. 11. 182-184

Bastard. . . I suddainely espied

Five moones reflecting, as you see them now: . . . Peter. The smallest moone that whirles about the rest, I T.R. XIII. 135-136, 170

That The Troublesome Raigne is the debtor is shown clearly by its indiscriminate borrowings not only from other plays of Shakespeare, but also from Peele's Arraignment of Paris, and from various other plays. For example the line (2 T.R. IV. 12):

Are marching hitherwards in good array

is borrowed from 2 Henry VI, IV. 1x. 27. The line in 3 Henry VI (IV. 1. 40):1

England is safe, if true within itself is combined with a similar passage in *King John*, V. vii. 116-118:

Come the three corners of the world in arms, And we shall shock them. Nought shall make us rue,

If England to herself do rest but true.

and produces the following (2 T.R. 1x. 45-46):

Let England live but true within it selfe, And all the world can never wrong her state.

A few further examples may be quoted. The Bastard's account of the defeat and disaster of John's forces in *The Troublesome Raigne* (II. vi. 23-53) echoes unmistakably the similar account related by Warwick, of the defeat of St. Alban's (3 Henry VI, II. 1. 104-150):

And now, to add more measure to your woes,
I come to tell you things sith then befall'n.

Short tale to make, we at St. Alban's met,
But whether 'twas the coldness of the king,
Or more than common fear of Clifford's rigour, 126

Who thunders to his captives blood and death,
I cannot judge: . . .

So that we fled; . . .

Lord George your brother, Norfolk and myself,
In haste, post-haste, are come to join with you;

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> For these and the following parallels from 2 and 3 Henry VI and Richard III I am indebted to Professor Peter Alexander.

For in the marches here we heard you were,

Making another head to fight again.

(Rich.) 'Twas odds, belike, when valiant Warwick

fled:

Oft have I heard his praises in pursuit

Oft have I heard his praises in pursuit, But ne'er till now his scandal of retire.

(Edw.) Then strike up drums: God and Saint George for us!

From this account *The Troublesome Raigne* has made the following, (including the fact that the Bastard's troops "gathered head", which occurs neither in *King John* nor in Holinshed):

Another moan, to make the measure full.

At last the rumour scal'd these ears of mine,
Who rather chose, as sacrifice for Mars,
Than ignominious scandal by retire.
I cheer'd the troops, as did the prince of Troy
His weary followers 'gainst the Myrmidons,
Crying aloud, "Saint George, the day is ours!"
But fear had captivated courage quite;
Short tale to make—myself among the rest,
Was fain to fly before the eager foe.
When in the morning our troops did gather head ...

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The reference to the prince of Troy is also taken from the same scene of 3 Henry VI, 50-52:

Environed he was with many foes, And stood against them, as the hope of Troy Against the Greeks that would have enter'd Troy.

Again, the line (2 T.R. vi. 1):

Set down set down the load not worth your pain!

is an obvious borrowing of Richard III, I. 11. 1: Set down, set down your honourable load—

and 2 T.R. 111. 172-173:

Your city Rochester, with great applause, By some divine instinct, laid arms aside,

echoes Richard III. II. 111. 42:

By a divine instinct men's minds mistrust Ensuing dangers;

The futility of arguing that The Troublesome Raigne is the original and Shakespeare the borrower in these parallels may be proved by turning to Shakespeare's source for Richard III, namely Holinshed (ed. Boswell-Stone, p. 353), where the original occurs:

were it, that, before such great things, mens hearts of a secret instinct of nature misgiue them; as the sea without wind swelleth of himselfe sometime before a tempest:

The words in italics are used by Shakespeare in Richard III, III. 38-44.

Other examples of phrases echoed in The Troublesome Raigne are1:

(a) And clad this land in stole of dismal hue,

1 T.R. i. 4.

With mournful tunes, in stole of dismal hue,

The Arraignment of Paris, iii. 1.

(b) If first-born son be heir indubitate

1 T.R. i. 110.

For good thou hast an heir indubitate Alphonsus, 1v. iii.

<sup>1</sup> From Dugdale Sykes, Sidelights on Shakespeare, 115-116.

(c) These thoughts are far unfitting Falconbridge; And well they may; for why this mounting mind Doth soar too high to stoop to Falconbridge.

1 T.R. i. 269-271.

Strike on, strike down this body to the earth Whose mounting mind stoops to no feeble stroke.

The Battle of Alcazar, V. I. 127-128.

King John and The Troublesome Raigne, again, are so closely parallel that any divergence, even the slightest, is of considerable consequence. Against the argument that Shakespeare drew all his material from The Troublesome Raigne, an agreement, however small, between King John and Holinshed as against The Troublesome Raigne, is final. If Shakespeare went direct to Holinshed for such a detail and is nearer to it than is The Troublesome Raigne, then it is certain that he went direct to Holinshed for all the other details in which the two plays are close to Holinshed and to each other; and further that he was the originator of the incidents and scenes which are in both plays but not in Holinshed. Examples of such agreement are:

Holinshed	King John	Tr. Raigne
supplie (p. 71)	supply	supplies
	V. 111. 9	II. v11. 54
	V. v. 12	
such offers of	such offers of	
agreement (p. 74)	our peace	
	V. vii. 84	

#### A third:

Holinshed. In consideration whereof (i.e. the dowry

of Blanch) king Iohn . . . resigned his title . . . vnto all those townes which the French king had by warre taken from him, the citie of Angiers onelie excepted, which citie he received against by covenants of the same agreement (p. 53).

King John. For Anjou and fair Touraine, Maine, Poictiers,

And all that we upon this side the sea Except this city now by us besieged, Find liable to our crown and dignity, Shall gild her bridal bed. . . .

King John, II. 1. 487-491

This reservation does not occur in The Trouble-some Raigne, although, later, Angiers is indeed given to Arthur by John.

It is difficult to imagine Shakespeare, Peele, and the author of Alphonsus each coming to draw distinct phrases from any single play, especially of the calibre of The Troublesome Raigne. It is even more difficult to imagine Shakespeare developing separately, in two plays, the phrases contained in one couplet of the anonymous play. And it is beyond the reach of imagination to suppose that Peele, in or about 1584 (the date of publication of The Arraignment of Paris), borrowed from a play of which the preface refers to Tamburlaine, written about 1587. The only conceivable explanation of the far-flung echoes in The Troublesome Raigne is that the author borrowed them all alike, including those lines which resemble lines in King

John. And that what is true of Peele and Alphonsus with regard to echoes is also true of Shakespeare—that The Troublesome Raigne is the borrower in every case—is corroborated by the instances given of the greater proximity of King John to Holinshed.

It is quite possible, indeed very likely, that The Troublesome Raigne made some independent use of Holinshed or of some other chronicle, either directly or indirectly. But it seems clear enough that Shakespeare's King John derives direct from Holinshed, and is earlier than The Troublesome Raigne. It follows that King John, and likewise Henry VI and Richard III, were written not later than 1591.

## Henry IV, Henry V, and The Famous Victories.

There is no definite evidence for the date of Henry IV. The only clues for that of Henry V occur in the choruses: "this wooden O" (Prologue to Act I, line 13) is supposed to refer to the Globe theatre, built in 1599; while "the general of our gracious empress . . . from Ireland coming" (Prologue to Act V, lines 30-31) is thought to refer to the expected return of Essex from Ireland whither he had gone on March 27, 1599. These references, however, are of a very general nature, and too much reliance cannot be placed on them. There were generals in Ireland before Essex, and other wooden O's besides the Globe. Moreover, the Irish reference may have been interpolated;

the choruses themselves may not belong to the original production. However that may be, the evidence of *The Famous Victories* is much more decisive.

It is now recognised that this play is a piracy of the loose type already examined in The Trouble-some Raigne. It covers the same ground as the three plays—I and 2 Henry IV and Henry V. If The Famous Victories, which was entered on the Stationers' Register on May 14, 1594, can now be shown to be later than the three Shakespearian plays, these must be assigned to an earlier date; and a reinterpretation of existing evidence will then make it clear that they belong not later than 1588.

The issue can be most adequately tried by confining it to the historical material in the various plays—the material we can trace to its sources. Now no historical facts are given in The Famous Victories and at the same time used by Shakespeare that are not in Holinshed; Shakespeare, that is to say, need not have gone for any of his material to The Famous Victories. Besides, Shakespeare's facts are not all available in The Famous Victories, so that he certainly used Holinshed: whereas there is little sign that the anonymous author did so. A large number of his facts are quoted wrongly, and he draws on sources not used by Shakespeare. If parallel passages are compared with each other and with Holinshed, it is at once obvious that

Shakespeare worked direct from Holinshed, and that *The Famous Victories* worked at one remove. Shakespeare's three plays therefore preceded *The Famous Victories*. For example:

Holinshed (Boswell-Stone, 196):

Of Englishmen, there died at this battell, Edward duke of Yorke; the earle of Suffolke; sir Richard Kikelie; and Davie Gamme esquier; and, of all other, not aboue fiue and twentie persons. . . .

Henry V (Boswell-Stone 196; IV. VIII. 100-104): Where is the number of our English dead?— Edward the Duke of Yorke, the Earle of Suffolke, Sir Richard Ketly, Dauy Gam, Esquire: None else of name; and, of all other men, But fiue and twentie.

Famous Victories (sig. F vo):

Of your Maiesties Armie, are slaine none but the good Duke of Yorke, and not aboue fiue or six and twentie Common souldiers. . . .

The debt of *The Famous Victories* to *Henry V*, and its ignorance of Holinshed, its lack of accurate acquaintance, indeed, with any other chronicler, are confirmed by the numerous glaring errors it contains, and by their nature. Henry's claim to the French crown, for instance, is correctly stated by Shakespeare, following Holinshed, thus:

. . . the crown and seat of France, Derived from Edward, his great-grandfather.

I. i. 88-89

... Also King Lewis the tenth, ... Could not keep quiet in his conscience,

Wearing the crown of France, till satisfied That fair Queen Isabel, his grandmother, Was lineal of the Lady Ermengare, . . .

I. 11. 77, 79-82

The Famous Victories thus condenses what is treated at considerable length in Shakespeare:

Your right to the French Crowne of France, Came by your great grandmother Izabel, Wife to King Edward the third, And sister to Charles the French King: (sig. D2)

The only Isabella who had any connection with Henry's claim to the French crown was his great-great-grandmother, the wife of Edward II. She was, however, sister to Charles IV of France, and, since Shakespeare nowhere refers to her, The Famous Victories must have drawn on some independent source of information. Its author, also, seems to have been misled by the expressions "great-grandfather" and "Isabel his grandmother" in Henry V.

Holinshed and Shakespeare give the number of "princes and nobles bearing banners" killed at Agincourt as a hundred and twenty-six; The Famous Victories as twenty-six hundred. Such errors could be multiplied.

The Famous Victories, indeed, must have drawn on some other chronicles, or, more probably, on some other play based on them. It contains accounts, for example, not found in Holinshed, of how Prince Hal robbed his father's "receivers",

and of a riot in Eastcheap. Halle or Stow, or both, may thus form sources of the play. Halle, for example, has these encouraging remarks made by the French captains on the eve of Agincourt: "For you must vnderstand, yt kepe an Englishman one moneth from hys warme bed, fat befe, and stale drynke... you then shall se his courage abated, hys bodye waxe leane and bare, and euer desirous to returne into hys own countrey". The Famous Victories derives from this, directly or indirectly, the lines:

Why take an English man out of his warme bed And his stale drinke, but one moneth, And alas what wil become of him? Sig. E4 ro

The author of *The Famous Victories* was also acquainted with, and borrowed from, 2 Henry VI and King John. King John says to the French ambassador Chatillon:

Be thou as lightning in the eyes of France; For ere thou canst report I will be there.

I. i. 24-25

In the same way the Archbishop of Burges, in The Famous Victories, reports to the French king:

besides, he bad me haste quickly,
Least he be there before me,

a statement which does not occur in *Henry V*.

Again, the Archbishop asks Henry for a safeconduct "vnder your broad seale Emanuel".

<sup>1</sup> Boswell-Stone, Holinshed, 185, note 3.

In his reply, Henry repeats the same phrase (D3 vo). The phrase is apparently derived from 2 Henry VI, IV. 11. 94 ff.—a passage not represented in any of the Chronicles:

Cade. . . . What is thy name?

Clerk. Emmanuel.

Dick. They use to write it on the top of letters: 'twill go hard with you.

The idea of the "seal" is probably due to association: a few lines earlier, Cade says, "I did but seal once to a thing, and I was never mine own man since".

The establishment of the fact that The Famous Victories is an inferior sort of piracy of Henry IV and Henry V now enables us to arrive with some precision at the real date of these plays. They cannot, of course, be earlier than 1587, when the second edition of Holinshed, their main source, was published; and they cannot be later than May 1594, when The Famous Victories was entered on the Stationers' Register. A statement hitherto believed to refer to The Famous Victories makes it possible to fix the date even more precisely. In Tarlton's Jests (ed. Halliwell, 1844, p. 24), it is recorded of that famous clown of the Queen's Men: "At the Bull at Bishopsgate was a play of Henry the Fifth, wherein the judge was to take a box on the ear; and because he was absent that should take the blow, Tarlton himself, ever forward to please, took upon him to play the same

judge, beside his own part of the clown: and Knel, then playing Henry the Fifth, hit Tarlton a sound box indeed, which made the people laugh the more because it was he; but anon the judge goes in, and immediately Tarlton in his clown's cloaths comes out, and asks the actors 'What news?' 'O,' saith one, 'hadst thou been here, thou shouldst have seen Prince Henry hit the judge a terrible box on the ear.' 'What, man!' said Tarlton, 'strike a judge?' 'It is true, yfaith,' said the other. 'No other like,' said Tarlton; 'and it could not be but terrible to the judge, when the report so terrifies me that methinks the blow remains still on my cheek that it burns again.' The people laughed at this mightily."

Tarlton died on September 3, 1588, which gives the second limit for Shakespeare's three plays. For it now seems certain that they, and not The Famous Victories, are referred to in this incident. It has been shown that Shakespeare's first company was the Queen's, to which Knell and Tarlton belonged, and the ascription of The Famous Victories, on its title-page, to the "Queenes Maiesties Players" means no more than that the plays pirated were acted by that company. It is unlikely, indeed impossible, that the Queen's, the dominant company in 1587–8, should ever have acted a play of the quality of The Famous Victories.

There are, however, two difficulties in the way of identifying Tarlton's *Henry the Fifth* with Shakespeare's. The Prince does not, in Shake-

speare, give the Lord Chief Justice a box on the ear; and, if he had done so, it would have occurred in I Henry IV, not in Henry V. The second of these is only a slight obstacle, since, as the piracy shows, Henry V was regarded as the hero of the whole trilogy. The original name of I Henry IV may well have been Henry V or I Henry V. Tarlton's italics, again, need not mean that Henry the Fifth was the title of the play; proper names were generally italicised as a matter of course. All that need be understood here is "a play dealing with Henry the Fifth", which would truly describe I or 2 Henry IV. Nor need the absence of the box on the ear from I Henry IV imply anything to the contrary. There evidently was such a scene originally in Act II, Sc. IV. of the play, and it is not unlikely that Elizabeth or the Censor, objecting to such treatment of a Lord Chief Justice, had it excised. That excision there was, is clear from the traces left. After the coming of the Sheriff, Henry announces, "I'll to the court in the morning"1. He has evidently been summoned there to answer to his father, Henry IV, for his treatment of the Lord Chief Justice. His father reproaches him with his conduct. He answers:

I would I could Quit all offences with as clear excuse As well as I am doubtless I can purge Myself of many I am charged withal: 2

1 II. iv. 525.

2 III. ii. 18-21.

The words "I am charged withal" suggest a report by the Lord Chief Justice and a summons to the King—now replaced by the mild dialogue with the Sheriff and his men. This is corroborated by the neglect to excise references to the incident in 2 Henry IV, where it is twice alluded to as a fact familiarly known:

- (1) Sir, here comes the nobleman that committed the prince for striking him about Bardolph. I. ii. 51-52
- (2) For the box of the ear that the prince gave you, he gave it like a rude prince, and you took it like a sensible lord.

  I. ii. 182-184

There is thus no difficulty in supposing that Tarlton acted in *I Henry IV*, which was therefore written between 1587 and September 3, 1588. The other two plays, 2 Henry IV and Henry V, must have followed shortly after, also possibly in the lifetime of Tarlton, but in any case before the Queen's left London in 1591, after which year they are not likely to have been able to add to their repertory.

There is thus nothing inconsistent in finding echoes from *Henry IV* and *Henry V* in the First Quarto of *Hamlet*, which has been assigned to 1593.

Similar echoes, indeed, from these plays are revealed by a detailed examination of the pirate's importations into *The Contention* and *The True Tragedy*. These are, I suggest, of themselves sufficient to show that *Henry IV* and *Henry V*, if not also *King John*, were familiar to him, and that therefore they were written not later than 1593.

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Words enclosed in brackets occur also in the corresponding "good" text.

## King John

Thou mayst befriend me so much.

V. vi. 10

The Bishop of Yorke befriends him much.

Tr. Tr. p. 620

theirs that lift their swords II. 35

To lift his sword

Tr. Tr. p. 626

#### I Henry IV

Four rogues . . . let drive at me II. 1v. 189 three knaves . . . let drive at me II. 1v. 216

let driue at him Tr. Tr. p. 590

Go to the Douglas, and deliver him Up to his pleasure, ransomless and free.

V. v. 27-28

And ransomelesse this prisoner shall go free, To see it safe deliuered vnto her.

Contention, p. 550

### 2 Henry IV

abridge my doleful days! II. abridgde my daies. Tr

here's goodly stuff.

Heres good stuffe

II. iv. 187

Tr. Tr., p. 585

II. iv. 190

Contention, p. 528

#### Henry V

right and title

The right and (title)

I. 11. 89

Contention, p. 528

a most contagious treason come to light.

IV. vIII. 20

In that these Treasons thus are come to light,

Contention, p. 530

God . . . give

You patience to endure, and true repentance Of all your dear offences! II. 11. 179-181 ... God had pourde his vengeance on thy head, For her offences that thou heldst so deare.

Contention, p. 530

K. Hen. Well have we done, thrice-valiant countrymen:

But all's not done; yet keep the French the field.

Exe. The Duke of York commends him to your majesty.

K. Hen. Lives he, good uncle? thrice within this hour I saw him down; thrice up again, and fighting; From helmet to the spur all blood he was.

Exe. . . . Suffolk first died; and York . . . . Cries aloud, 'Tarry. . . . . Upon these words I came and cheer'd him up: He smiled me in the face, raught me his hand,

IV. vi. 1-21

Rich. . . . Thy noble father in the thickest thronges, (Cride) still (for Warwike) his thrice valiant son, . . . He waft his hand to me and cride aloud:

Richard, (commend me to my valiant) sonne, . . . And with those words he tumbled off his horse,

Tr. Tr. pp. 599-600

Rich. My Lord, I saw him in the thickest throng, . . .

And thrise I saw him beaten from his horse,

And thrise this hand did set him vp againe,

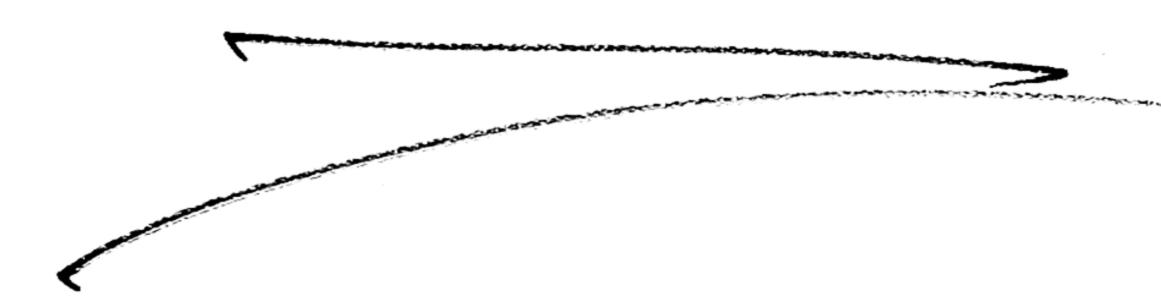
Contention p. 568

K. Hen. Call in the messengers sent from the Dauphin.

I. 11. 221

Mont. . . . heere is the messenger returned from France. Tr. Tr. p. 617

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## 11. "LEAR" AND "LEIR"

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#### 11. "LEAR" AND "LEIR"

WE have texts of two Elizabethan plays on the story of King Lear and his daughters; Shakespeare's King Lear; and a play, by an unknown author, called The True Chronicle History of King Leir. . . . It will be convenient to distinguish these, from the difference in spelling, as Lear and Leir. Lear, written by Shakespeare, is supposed to have made some slight use of Leir as a basis. It is generally accepted that Leir was written earlier than May 14, 1594, on which date it was entered on the Stationers' Register; and Lear some time about 1605. It now seems certain, however, that the relation of the two plays has been inverted; that in reality Lear was written first—that is, some time earlier than 1594—and that Leir represents an attempt to reproduce its main plot.

It may be assumed, as it has been reasonably assumed, that the Stationers' Register entry of 1594 refers to Leir. If not, then to refer it to Lear would serve even better the purposes of this argument; while to assume the existence of a third play on the same subject—a play of which we would know nothing whatever, and which we have no ground for assuming, is both unecono-

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mical and unjustified, especially if a satisfactory explanation can be found by confining the case to the two plays we have. Besides—to follow out this line of argument—we should still have no guarantee that the *Leir* entry referred to the same play as Henslowe's *Leare*, so that we should require to postulate, not one, but two further

plays.

It is not difficult to connect the entry of Leir on the Stationers' Register in 1594 with the Leir published in 1605. The entry was made by Edward White, the bookseller; but no edition corresponding to this entry has come to light. On May 8, 1605, Leir was again entered on the Stationers' Register by Simon Stafford, and assigned to John Wright, for whom he immediately printed the play. On June 29, 1624, "Leire and his daughters" was transferred from Mrs. White, widow of Edward White, to E. Alde.2 That the copyright of Leir remained throughout in the hands of White and his executors, in spite of the printing of the 1605 edition by John Wright, is made almost certain by the fact that Wright had been White's apprentice from 1594 until 1602, and was in 1605 setting up for himself. He probably bought the right to print one edition. It is clear, then, that we are dealing with the same play throughout,

<sup>1</sup> This entry of Henslowe's (1594) will be discussed later.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Arber, iv. 120.

and that the Leir published in 1605 was the play originally entered in 1594.

Leir tells the same story as Lear, except that it lacks the sub-plot involving Gloucester, Edmund, and Edgar, and includes two scenes not represented in Lear. Some of the dramatis personae appear under different names, indeed, and with differences in character, and the story agrees only in a very loose way, but there is no doubt that there is some relation between the two plays.

In a number of points, indeed, they agree as against all other versions of the story. At least two new characters, Kent (Perillus) and Oswald (Skalliger), roughly correspond in both plays. In both, also, the king gives away his entire kingdom, whereas Holinshed and the earlier historians make him reserve half for himself. Spenser,1 in the Faerie Queene (1590) was the first to make the alteration, and both plays have adopted this version. Spenser was also the first to make Lear divide his kingdom in equal shares; and again this method is followed in both plays. So, the thunderstorm, the double kneeling of the King to Cordelia, his wanderings, and the humanity of Albany, are all features found nowhere outside of these plays.

Again, in occasional lines, not found in any of the sources, the two plays agree verbally or very closely. (1) Lear, I. 1. 120 ff.

Lear. Peace, Kent!

Come not between the dragon and his wrath.

I loved her most. . . .

Kent, on thy life, no more.

Leir, II. 111. 99

Urge this no more, and if thou love thy life:

(2) Lear, III. 11. 37-38

No, I will be the pattern of all patience; I will say nothing.

Leir, III. 1. 12-13

But he, the mirror of mild patience, Puts up all wrongs, and never gives reply.

(3) Lear, II. iv. 161-162

Strike her young bones, You taking airs, with lameness.

Leir, III. 111. 27

poor soul, she breeds young bones.

It should now be abundantly clear that one play follows the other. The question is: Which?

The question may be settled by an examination of Leir. Several peculiar features thrust themselves forward, but to discuss them effectively it will be necessary to fix an approximate earlier limit for the date of the play.

It has often been pointed out that Leir is based on Spenser's Faerie Queene, and Warner's Albion's England, among other sources. The dramatist, says

Sir Sidney Lee, "seeks in Spenser, who therein differs from all his predecessors, the title of King of Cambria for the husband of Regan. . . . From Warner comes the form 'Cordella' for the name of the King's youngest daughter, as well as the appellation 'the Gallian King' for Cordella's husband. . . . Warner, moreover, alone gave the hint . . . of the eldest daughter's unfilial attempt on the old King's life." Albion's England was published in 1586 and The Faerie Queene (I-III) in 1590. Leir cannot therefore have been written before that date, and thus clearly belongs to the period 1590-94.

Now Leir abounds in phrases recalling well-known passages in other Elizabethan plays. Marlowe and Peele, for example, supply many. In the opening lines, Leir refers to his "deceas'd queen"

Whose soul I hope, possess'd of heavenly joys, Doth ride in triumph 'mongst the cherubins;

which echoes one of the most famous of all Elizabethan declamations, in Tamburlaine:

And ride in triumph through Persepolis.

II. v. 130-131

Again,

Peace, bastard imp, no issue of King Leir,

I. III. 113

is an echo of Tamburlaine, 2638-9,

Lee, pp. xxx-xxxi (Leir, Shakespeare Classics).

Bastardly boy, sprong from some cowards loins, And not the issue of Great Tamburlaine.

So with Peele. Many parallels have been pointed out by Dugdale Sykes 1, from single words rarely if ever found outside Peele's works—sequestered (III. v. 2), scuse (sb. = excuse: II. III. 58), unpartial (I. i. 39), etc.—to phrases, like—true succession (II. III. 83), it resteth (II. I. 49), what resteth (II. III. 78), and longest home (= the grave: III. v. 10). All of these are paralleled in known plays of Peele—The Arraignment of Paris, David and Bethsabe, and Edward I.

Now these plays of Marlowe and Peele, since they were written before 1590, were the source of the phrases just quoted from Leir. The author, it is even already obvious, was a man with a receptive rather than an original mind, a man, also, who was well acquainted with the drama and poetry of the time. When, on further examination, Leir is found to teem with such echoes from other dramatists, including Shakespeare, no surprise is aroused. He knew so many, in fact, that, perhaps unconsciously, he had reached the point of confusing them, and in a reproduction such as Leir, incorporated odd scenes from other plays. It is clear, at any rate, on which side the borrowing has been done. A few examples of similar borrowings from Shakespeare will suffice:

<sup>1</sup> Sidelights on Shakespeare: The Pre-Shakespearian "King Leir".

#### Merchant of Venice, V. 1. 14

That did renew old Æson.

That which old Æson drank, which did renew His wither'd age, and made him young again.

Leir, V. 1v. 96-97

#### 3 Henry VI, II. 1. 91-92

if thou be that princely eagle's bird, Show thy descent by gazing 'gainst the sun.

And yet as jealous as the princely eagle, That kills her young ones, if they do but dazzle Upon the radiant splendour of the sun.

Leir, II. III. 45-47

#### A Midsummer-Night's Dream, I. 1. 173

. . . . by that fire which burn'd the Carthage queen.

Or brave Aeneas to the Carthage queen.

Leir, II, 111. 66

The only tenable view of these and many other similar passages in Leir is that they are freely borrowed or imitated (perhaps subconsciously). It is as unlikely that Shakespeare went to this source for them as that Marlowe and Peele did. In any case, it would be a fanciful position to imagine Shakespeare using Leir as a basis, and omitting with great exactitude all the phrases he had already used or intended to use in another play of his, as well as the phrases that Leir had borrowed from Marlowe and Peele; or that all three dramatists, after 1590, borrowed phrases

and allusions, and Shakespeare a plot, from this drama.

There is, further, at least one scene in Leir that has been borrowed in outline from Shakespeare. A consideration of Act V, Sc. IV shows that it is an imitation of the episode in As You Like It where Orlando leads the fainting Adam through the forest and demands food for him from the exiled Duke and his friends. The two passages are obviously connected as source and imitation. Which is the source of the other can readily be determined by reference to Lodge's Rosalynde, the known source from which Shakespeare drew this scene. The very fact that Shakespeare took the rest of his main plot from Lodge arouses the expectation that he had the priority. And so it is.

A comparison of the few phrases common to all three versions confirms the natural order:

#### (1) Rosalynde<sup>1</sup>

"Master. . . . we can find no food."

"I and a fellow-friend of mine are here famished in the forest for want of food."

". . . . famished almost for food."

"But to die with hunger, Adam, . . . "

#### (2) As You Like It

II. vi. O I die for food!

I will either be *food* for it or bring it for *food* to thee.

1 Shakespeare Classics, pp. 59-61.

II. vii. 104. I almost die for food.

II. vii. 128-129. I go to find my fawn And give it food.

#### (3) Leir, V. IV. 22

Oh, I do faint for want of sustenance.

Just before the "Adam" scene in As You Like It, Celia has also arrived in the forest. She says,

I faint almost to death II. IV. 61 and Rosalind says of her that she "faints for succour" (II. IV. 70), which suggested the phrase in *Leir*, "faints for sustenance".

It is possible, however, that the author of Leir had become, independently, or through his interest in As You Like It, acquainted with Lodge's Rosalynde. For in this scene he relates one incident which appears in that source, but not in As You Like It. In the forest Adam says to Rosader (Orlando), "I am old, and overworn with age, you are young, and are the hope of many honours; let me then die, I will presently cut my veins, and, master, with the warm blood relieve your fainting spirits; suck on that till I end, and you be comforted". In Leir, Perillus offers the old king a similar service:

Feed on this flesh, whose veins are not so dry, But there is virtue left to comfort you. Oh, feed on this, if this will do you good, I'll smile for joy, to see you suck my blood.

V. IV. 34-37

<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare Classics, p. 59.

II

It is, of course, possible, that this incident had appeared in As You Like It originally, but had either been "cut" or omitted. And whether or not the author of Leir went direct to Rosalynde, the introduction of this particular incident into his play seems certain to have been suggested to him by seeing the Adam-Orlando episode on the stage. Now the earlier limit for the date of As You Like It is fixed by the reference to the death of Marlowe and the quotation from his Hero and Leander:

Dead shepherd, now I find thy saw of might.
"Who ever loved that loved not at first sight?"
III. v. 80-81

If these suppositions are correct, then Leir was written between June 1593 and May 14, 1594, probably towards the end of that period. It follows, incidentally, that As You Like It may be referred to the second half of 1593 or the early months of 1594, and is earlier than Leir.

Shakespeare, then, did not borrow from this play. He was the creditor—not entirely, for Leir draws on Spenser and Warner, and perhaps also on Lodge—but certainly a creditor. For most of his material the author of Leir was indebted to Shakespeare and other dramatists. The relation currently assumed between Leir and Lear is thus inverted. And, on a return to the parallels of phrase and fact between the two plays—from which, taken alone, it was found impossible to decide which was creditor and which debtor—few

difficulties remain for final explanation. The chief ostensible borrowing is thus explained by Sir Sidney Lee: "There is a reminiscence of Skalliger", he says, "in the Fool's otherwise inexplicable reference (I. IV. 139) to

'That lord that counselled thee To give away thy land.'

No lord gives such counsel to Lear in Shake-speare's play. It was the advice with which the old dramatist credited Skalliger, whose time-serving propensities helped to generate the wicked servility of Goneril's servant, Oswald." What has really happened here is that the "old dramatist", remembering the opening lines of the Fool's song, when he had forgotten much else of the story of Shakespeare's play, fathered the "counsel" on Skalliger, and incorporated in the business of the play what in *Lear* was only a tag bearing but generally on the old king's folly. Neither the tag nor the counsel are, of course, in any of the original sources.

It will now be clear that the entry made in the Stationers' Register on May 14, 1594, and repeated on May 8, 1605, of a play called Leir, which was published immediately thereafter, refers to the play which we have called Leir—a play written after, and partly founded on, Shake-speare's Lear. Another record of the same year now falls to be considered. On April 6, 1594, and

again two days later, Philip Henslowe entered in his Diary a play called King Leare. The entry occurs in a short list of plays acted by "the Quenes men & my lord of Susexe to geather". Of the five plays mentioned, King Leare alone can be reasonably assigned to the Queen's Men.<sup>1</sup>

In May of the same year, the Queen's, then on their last legs, had to give up. No longer able to support themselves by acting in London, they sold what they could of their stock, and some of them at least, after raising money by loan, formed a provincial company which can be traced until 1603, but which never again appeared in London. On May 8 Henslowe records a loan of £15 to his nephew Francis Henslowe "to lay downe for his share to the Quenes players when they broke & went into the contrey to playe". Francis Henslowe seems to have left London on the 18th. Before leaving, however, the Queen's Men had sold a number of their plays, some to the publishers, some to other companies.

Now the Leire of the Stationers' Register has been shown to be the printed Leir, with which, moreover, it agrees in spelling. The "book" of Lear(e), however, was not sold to the publishers, but to the Lord Chamberlain's Men, Shake-speare's then company. For it remained in their hands until 1608, when it was entered—a distinct

<sup>1</sup> Chambers, Eliz. Stage, ii. 114 and Shakespeare, ii. 317-318.

<sup>2</sup> Greg, Henslowe, i. 4.

play from Leir, itself twice entered—on the Stationers' Register, being published in 1608 by Nathaniel Butter for John Busby. That this was Shakespeare's play is confirmed by the spelling (although Henslowe's was not often too exact), by the early date of Lear as already shown, and by the fact that the play is found in the hands of the Queen's Men, with whom there is good reason to believe that Shakespeare had previously been associated, and in whose list Hamlet is also found.

The date of Lear itself remains to be determined. Like Leir, Lear also, and independently, drew on The Faerie Queene. The form "Cordelia" comes from Spenser alone. Holinshed has "Cordeilla", Warner gives "Cordell", while Leir uses "Cordella". It thus cannot have been written earlier than the date of publication of The Faerie Queene (I-III). Nor can it have been written earlier than Sidney's Arcadia, from which the story of Gloucester and his sons is derived. Both The Faerie Queene and the Arcadia were first published in 1590, which gives the earlier limit for the date of Lear.

Lear, further, cannot be dated later than 1594. The position in which it is found in Henslowe's Diary suggests that it came into the hands of the Chamberlain's Men from the Queen's, who acted it then. The Queen's in 1594 sold a considerable

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See Introduction by Pollard to Alexander, Henry VI and Richard III.

number of their plays, either to the Chamberlain's Men, or to the printers. And since few or no new plays are likely to have been commissioned during the plague years 1592-3, King Lear was almost certainly written not later than 1592. Lear must therefore have been written between 1590 and 1592, probably in 1591. This is the more likely since the Queen's, for whom it was written, made their last effective appearance in London in 1591.

If, therefore, either Henslowe's entry of 1594 or the Stationers' Register of the same year, refers to either play, then Lear was written before that date. As a further consequence of this argument, if it is correct, As you Like It was written between June 1593 and May 1594, and A Midsummer-Night's Dream before the latter date.



### 12. A NOTE ON "MACBETH"

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#### 12. A NOTE ON "MACBETH"

With Hamlet, Othello, and King Lear assigned to the years 1589-91, conjecture suggests that the fourth of the great tragedies, Macbeth, may also find its natural place among them, and that the revolution effected by re-dating may not after all be so radical as it seems—that this group may remain intact and in approximately the same order as has already been determined.

Nothing in the internal allusions proves, on examination, to be inconsistent with a date about 1588-90. It is, at the outset, obvious that the episode referring to King James's touching for the King's Evil (IV. 111. 140-159) is an interpolation, inserted after 1603 to flatter James I. The "farmer that hanged himself on th' expectation of plenty" (II. 111. 4-5) had already appeared in person on the stage in Ben Jonson's Every Man out of his Humour(1.3; 111.7,8), originally produced in 1599, and was apparently a stock jest. The "two-fold balls" (IV. 1. 121) are, as Sir E. K. Chambers explains,1 the "mounds" borne on the English and Scottish crowns, and the "treble sceptres" are "the two used for investment in the English coronation and the one used in the

Scottish coronation". This, however, need not fix the date after 1603, for James was, after the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, regarded by the English nobles as the heir to the English crown. It is more likely, however, that the passage is an interpolation of the same sort as that on the King's Evil.

The "equivocator, that could swear in both the scales against either scale; who committed treason enough for God's sake, yet could not equivocate to heaven" (II. 111. 8-11) is generally accepted as referring to the Jesuit, Father Henry Garnet, who was tried for complicity in the Gunpowder Plot, on March 28, 1606. The Jesuits and their doctrine of equivocation, however, were familiar in London at least since the arrival of Campion and his friends in 1580; and were particularly associated with treason in the Babington Plot in 1586. Babington, a recusant, and five others, were instigated by John Ballard, a Jesuit priest, to assassinate Elizabeth. Ballard, Babington, and the rest had been closely associated throughout with Campion's friends, Allen and Parsons. The plotters were executed on September 20 and 21, 1586.1 Macbeth may very well refer to this plot.

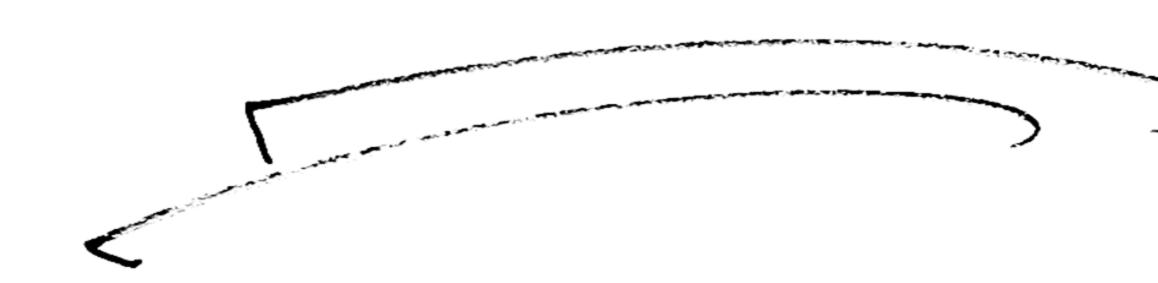
It may further be remarked that the source of *Macbeth* is Holinshed, a source that Shakespeare might be expected to use about the same time as he was writing his histories.

<sup>1</sup> A. F. Pollard, Pol. Hist. of England, ii. 394-395.

Finally—a small point, but an important one—an examination of the Port Books of London made with a view to testing this highly conjectural dating of *Macbeth*, showed that the only ship *Tiger* that had any connection with the Mediterranean and especially the Levant, made its last appearance in that port in March 1588,1 at the end of a voyage which can be followed as far as Dartmouth in Hakluyt2 and the State Papers.3

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> E 190/7/8, 68 ro and vo. <sup>2</sup> Voyages, v. 455; vi. 1-9, 35, 43. <sup>3</sup> State Papers Foreign, 1586-8, p. 335.

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## 13. SHAKESPEARIAN CHRONOLOGY

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#### 13. SHAKESPEARIAN CHRONOLOGY

A FEW further conclusions may now be drawn, if only as hypotheses suggested, and not as facts finally established.

The company which produced Hamlet QI, it has been argued above, was Pembroke's. This company, as Professor Alexander has shown, was also responsible for two other piracies, The Contention and The True Tragedy. These three versions all contain echoes from Marlowe's Edward II. It has been suggested that the same pirate was responsible for all three. It may be further suggested—though this is not the place to attempt proof of the suggestion—that the other Bad Quartos—those of Romeo and Juliet, Henry V., and The Merry Wives of Windsor—together with a few non-Shakespearian piracies, such as The Massacre at Paris and I Jeronimo, are from the same hand.

Whether or not the whole of the argument, or arguments, presented in this volume be taken as proved, it has at any rate become evident that Shakespeare wrote his plays in much more rapid succession, and much earlier, than has hitherto been surmised. There is nothing either improbable or astonishing about this. One has only to consider, mutatis mutandis, the career of Marlowe—

Shakespeare's senior by only a month or two—the work of Keats and Shelley, or Sheridan writing *The Rivals* at twenty-one, or the incessant fertility of Sir Walter Scott; and then to examine *Henry V* alongside of Holinshed, to have the apparent marvel reduced to more measurable terms.

Further, it appears that the principle of Shakespeare's dramatic work should be sought, like that of the University Wits and indeed of most popular writers, rather along topical lines than in any self-sufficient principle of internal development. It was probably popular demand and the chance acquaintance with Holinshed or Plutarch, rather than any psychological process of development, that determined Shakespeare at one particular moment to write comedy or tragedy or history. Consider in this light Nashe's attack in 1589. That Shakespeare and Kyd, whom Nashe is attacking, had both previously written "Senecan" dramas, may be accepted at once—The Spanish Tragedy and Hamlet furnishing an example for each. After referring to these, Nashe continues, "The sea exhaled by droppes will in continuance be drie, and Seneca let bloud line by line, and page by page, at length must needes die to our stage: which makes his famisht followers to imitate the Kidde in Aesop, who enamored with the Foxes newfangles, forsooke all hopes of life to leape into a new occupation; and these men renowncing all possibilities of credit or estimation, to inter-

meddle with Italian translations": The whole passage from which this is an extract cannot be taken to apply to Shakespeare in every detail, but it may without improbability be suggested that the general trend of the dramatists attacked was from Seneca to Italian "translations", and that this trend includes Shakespeare, who had drawn on Seneca. "Translations", as the context and other allusions in the same preface make plain, is used in a very wide sense, including not only strict translations, but also stage adaptations of Italian material, or plays based on Italian originals. Nashe has already referred to dramatists who "feed on nought but the crummes that fal from the translators trencher", and to those that "borrow inuention of Ariosto, and his Countreymen". Of the plays indebted to Ariosto that can be dated before 1593 there are at least Othello and The Taming of the Shrew, while the date of Much Ado about Nothing is uncertain. From other Italian sources, and also not later than 1593, we have Twelfth Night, The Merry Wives, and perhaps All's Well. Is it not possible that—with the exception of Twelfth Night which has been fixed in 1593—one at least of these plays may have been written before 1589, and be included in the range of Nashe's satire?

Again, it is worth noticing that no echoes have been found in *Hamlet QI* of the Roman plays. It has been conjectured that for these plays

Shakespeare used the second edition of North's Plutarch; this would confirm the conjecture.1

A tentative scheme of Shakespearian chronology may now be sketched out as a working basis, after testing, for further investigation. It will be understood that other plays may also fall within any section of this scheme, that some of the allocations have little evidence to support them, and that the order given is in no sense intended as rigid or final.

- (I) Pericles
- (2) Latin adaptations and themes, > 1589

  Comedy of Errors 2

Titus Andronicus(?)
Julius Caesar(?)

(3) Histories (Holinshed), 1587 <

King John
Richard II

1 and 2 Henry IV

Henry V

1, 2, and 3 Henry V |

Richard III

(4) Senecan Tragedy

Hamlet, 1589
Othello
Macbeth
King Lear, 1591

1 I have some grounds, however, for excepting Julius Caesar, which was probably written shortly before Hamlet, i.e. in 1588 or very early in 1589.

2 Smart, Shakespeare: Truth and Tradition, pp. 205-207.

- (5) Italian "Translations", 1589 <
  The Taming of the Shrew 1
  Romeo and Juliet (1591?)
  The Merchant of Venice
  Twelfth Night (January 6, 1593)
- (6) "Occasional" Plays
  The Merry Wives of Windsor
  Twelfth Night
  As You Like It, June 1593, < > May 1594
  A Midsummer-Night's Dream, > May 1594
- (7) Roman Plays (exc. Julius Caesar), 1595 <
- (8) The Tempest, 1603 <

It seems that Shakespeare began (after Pericles, a composite work) with direct imitation of Plautus, with whom he was probably familiar from his schooldays. The Comedy of Errors, as Dr. Smart suggested,<sup>2</sup> is earlier than 1589, and was probably one of his very first attempts. Thence, with the rise of national feeling against Spain and pride in the achievements and history of England, together with the convenient appearance of the second edition of Holinshed in 1587, Shakespeare passed naturally to the chronicle play and probably wrote the whole series from Richard II to 3 Henry VI with very little delay. With the success of Kyd's Spanish Tragedy—also topical—and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Alexander, T.L.S., September 16, 1926.

<sup>2</sup> Smart, Shakespeare: Truth and Tradition, pp. 205-207.

the vogue of the Senecan revenge-play, he wrote Hamlet, and followed with other tragedies at intervals till about 1591. In these intervals, having exhausted Holinshed, he proceeded to Italian sources. By 1592, if not earlier, his rising popularity, as witness Greene's attack (which implies, moreover, his many-sided powers), caused him to be called on for plays for special occasions. He thus produced—still from Italian sources—Twelfth Night. After 1595, using North as a source-book, he seems to have gone on to the Roman plays. Finally all that can be said for certain is that The Tempest, probably his last play, was written not earlier than 1603. Other plays must be left at present to conjecture.

As for the tragic period—"In the Depths"—it may be remarked that all the great tragedies seem to hang together in much the same order as before. The only change is that they come earlier, in Shakespeare's youth instead of in middle age. This is natural. It is not your middle-aged men who write tragedies. World-weariness is a phase of heaviest incidence in youth. Older men generally succeed in putting it behind them.

Many other conclusions and conjectures are possible here, but not yet profitable. It will be enough if, of those that have been put forward, there remains established the thesis that *Hamlet*,

as we have it, was written by William Shakespeare not later than August 1589; and that a new chronology of Shakespeare's work requires to be constructed, of which the tentative and rather slender foundations have been laid.

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#### APPENDIX

# PARALLELS BETWEEN THE FIRST QUARTO OF "HAMLET", AND "THE CONTEN-TION" AND "THE TRAGEDY"

(References are to The Cambridge Shakespeare, Vol. IX. Words within brackets appear also in the corresponding scene in the "good" texts. All other words appear only in the "bad" texts. The parallels illustrate the thesis that the same actor wrote all three piracies. Cf. p. 96.)

- 1. Tr. Tr. all these (wrongs), p. 611

  Ham. all the (wrong), xvIII. 52
- 2. Cont. amongst you, p. 537
  Tr. Tr. amongst vs, p. 629
  Ham. among vs, 1x. 15
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